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THE MAID OF ORLEANS

THE BRIDE OF MESSINA

WILHELM TELL

DEMETRIUS

"Rudenz and I bore her between us"

Photogravure from the painting by Fred. Schwoerer

The Maid of Orleans

The Bride of Messina
Wilhelm Tell
Demetrius

BY

Friedrich Schiller

Translated by

Sir Theodore Martin
Anna Swanwick, and A. Lodge

Edited by Nathan Haskell Dole

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Maid of Orleans and William Tell.

The Maid of Orleans

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

CHARLES THE SEVENTH, King of France.
QUEEN ISABEL, his Mother.
AGNES SOREL.
PHILIP THE GOOD, Duke of Burgundy.
EARL DUNOIS, Bastard of Orleans.
LA HIRE, DU CHATEL, French Officers.
ARCHBISHOP OF RHEIMS.
CHATILLON, a Burgundian Knight.
RAOUL, a Lotharingian Knight.
TALBOT, the English General.
LIONEL, FASTOLFE, English Officers.
MONTGOMERY, a Welshman.
COUNCILLORS OF ORLEANS.
AN ENGLISH HERALD.
THIBAUT D'ARC, a wealthy Countryman.
MARGOT, LOUISON, JOHANNA, his Daughters.
ETIENNE, CLAUDE MARIE, RAIMOND, their Suitors.
BERTRAND, another Countryman.
Apparition of a black Knight.
CHARCOAL-BURNER AND HIS WIFE.
Soldiers and People. Officers of the Crown. Bishops, Monks, Marshals, Magistrates, Courtiers, and other mute persons in the Coronation Procession.

The Maid of Orleans

PROLOGUE.

A rural District. To the right, a Chapel with an Image of the Virgin; to the left, an ancient oak.

Scene I.

Thibaut D'Arc. *His three Daughters. Three young Shepherds, their Suitors.*

Thib. Ay, my good neighbours! we at least to-day
Are Frenchmen still, free citizens and lords
Of the old soil, which our forefathers till'd.
Who knows whom we to-morrow must obey?
For England her triumphal banner waves
From every wall; the blooming fields of France
Are trampled down beneath her chargers' hoofs;
Paris hath yielded to her conquering arms,
And with the ancient crown of Dagobert
Adorns the scion of a foreign race.
Our king's descendant, disinherited,
Must steal in secret through his own domain;
While his first peer and nearest relative
Contends against him in the hostile ranks;
Ay, his unnatural mother leads them on.
Around us towns and peaceful hamlets burn.

Near and more near the devastating fire
Rolls toward these vales, which yet repose in peace.
— Therefore, good neighbours, I have now resolved,
While God still grants us safety, to provide
For my three daughters; for 'midst war's alarms
Women require protection, and true love
Hath power to render lighter every load.
[*To the first Shepherd.*
Come, Etienne! You seek my Margot's hand.
Fields lying side by side and loving hearts
Promise a happy union! [*To the second.*
Claude! You're silent,
And my Louison looks upon the ground?
How, shall I separate two loving hearts
Because you have no wealth to offer me?
Who now has wealth? Our barns and homes afford
Spoil to the foe, and fuel to their fires.
In times like these, a husband's faithful breast
Affords the only shelter from the storm.

LOUIS. My father!

CLAUDE MARIE. My Louison!

LOUIS. (*embracing* JOHANNA) My dear sister!

THIB. I give to each a yard, a stall and herd,
And also thirty acres; and as God
Gave me his blessing, so I give you mine!

MARGOT. (*embracing* JOHANNA) Gladden our father
— follow our example!
Let this day see three unions ratified!

THIB. Now go; make all things ready; for the morn
Shall see the wedding. Let our village friends
Be all assembled for the festival.
[*The two couple retire arm-in-arm.*

Scene II.

Thibaut, Raimond, Johanna.

Thib. Thy sisters, Joan, will soon be happy brides;
I see them gladly, they rejoice my age;
But thou, my youngest, giv'st me grief and pain.
Raim. What is the matter? Why upbraid thy child?
Thib. Here is this noble youth, the flower and pride
Of all our village; he hath fix'd on thee
His fond affections, and for three long years
Has woo'd thee with respectful tenderness;
But thou dost thrust him back, with cold reserve,
Nor is there one 'mong all our shepherd youths
Who e'er can win a gracious smile from thee.
— I see thee blooming in thy youthful prime;
Thy spring it is, the joyous time of hope;
Thy person, like a tender flower, hath now
Disclos'd its beauty, but I vainly wait
For love's sweet blossom genially to blow,
And ripen joyously to golden fruit!
Oh, that must ever grieve me, and betrays
Some sad deficiency in nature's work!
The heart I like not, which, severe and cold,
Expands not in the genial years of youth.
Raim. Forbear, good father! Cease to urge her thus!
A noble, tender fruit of heavenly growth
Is my Johanna's love, and time alone
Bringeth the costly to maturity!
Still she delights to range among the hills,
And fears descending from the wild, free heath,
To tarry 'neath the lowly roofs of men,

Where dwell the narrow cares of humble life.
From the deep vale, with silent wonder, oft
I mark her, when, upon a lofty hill,
Surrounded by her flock, erect she stands,
With noble port, and bends her earnest gaze
Down on the small domains of earth. To me
She looketh then, as if from other times
She came, foreboding things of import high.

THIB. 'Tis that precisely which displeases me!
She shuns her sisters' gay companionship;
Seeks out the desert mountains, leaves her couch
Before the crowing of the morning cock,
And in the dreaded hour, when men are wont
Confidingly to seek their fellow men,
She, like the solitary bird, creeps forth,
And in the fearful spirit-realm of night,
To yon crossway repairs, and there alone
Holds secret commune with the mountain wind.
Wherefore this place precisely doth she choose?
Why hither always doth she drive her flock?
For hours together I have seen her sit
In dreamy musing 'neath the Druid tree,
Which every happy creature shuns with awe.
For 'tis not holy there; an evil spirit
Hath since the fearful pagan days of old
Beneath its branches fix'd his dread abode.
The oldest of our villagers relate
Strange tales of horror of the Druid tree;
Mysterious voices of unearthly sound
From its unhallow'd shade oft meet the ear.
Myself, when in the gloomy twilight hour
My path once chanc'd to lead me near this tree,
Beheld a spectral figure sitting there,
Which slowly from its long and ample robe
Stretch'd forth its wither'd hand, and beckon'd me;
But on I went with speed, nor look'd behind,
And to the care of God consign'd my soul.

RAIM. (*pointing to the image of the Virgin*) Yon
holy image of the Virgin blest,
Whose presence heavenly peace diffuseth round,
Not Satan's work, leadeth thy daughter here.
THIB. No! not in vain hath it in fearful dreams
And apparitions strange reveal'd itself.
For three successive nights I have beheld
Johanna sitting on the throne at Rheims,
A sparkling diadem of seven stars
Upon her brow, the sceptre in her hand,
From which three lilies sprung, and I, her sire,
With her two sisters, and the noble peers,
The earls, archbishops, and the king himself,
Bow'd down before her. In my humble home,
How could this splendour enter my poor brain?
Oh, 'tis the prelude to some fearful fall!
This warning dream, in pictur'd show, reveals
The vain and sinful longing of her heart.
She looks with shame upon her lowly birth,
Because with richer beauty God hath grac'd
Her form, and dower'd her with wondrous gifts
Above the other maidens of this vale.
She in her heart indulges sinful pride,
And pride it is, through which the angels fell,
By which the fiend of hell seduces man.
RAIM. Who cherishes a purer, humbler mind
Than doth thy pious daughter? Does she not
With cheerful spirit work her sisters' will?
She is more highly gifted far than they,
Yet, like a servant maiden, it is she
Who silently performs the humblest tasks.
Beneath her guiding hands prosperity
Attendeth still thy harvests and thy flocks;
And around all she does there ceaseless flows
A blessing, rare and unaccountable.
THIB. Ay, truly! Unaccountable indeed!
Sad horror at this blessing seizes me!

— But now no more; henceforth I will be silent.
Shall I accuse my own beloved child?
I can do nought but warn and pray for her,
Yet warn I must. — O shun the Druid tree!
Stay not alone, and in the midnight hour
Break not the ground for roots, no drinks prepare,
No characters inscribe upon the sand!
'Tis easy to unlock the realm of spirits;
Listening each sound, beneath a film of earth
They lie in wait, ready to rush aloft.
Stay not alone, for in the wilderness
The prince of darkness tempted e'en our Lord.

Scene III.

THIBAUT, RAIMOND, JOHANNA.

BERTRAND *enters, a helmet in his hand.*

RAIM. Hush! here is Bertrand coming back from town,
What bears he in his hand?
BERT. You look at me
With wondering gaze; no doubt you are surprised
To see this martial helm!
THIB. We are indeed!
Come, tell us how you came by it? Why bring
This fearful omen to our peaceful vale?
[JOHANNA, *who has remained indifferent during the two previous scenes, becomes attentive, and steps nearer.*
BERT. I scarce can tell you how I came by it.
I had procur'd some tools at Vaucouleurs;
A crowd was gather'd in the market-place,
For fugitives were just arriv'd in haste
From Orleans, bringing most disastrous news.

In tumult all the town together flock'd,
And as I forc'd a passage through the crowds,
A brown Bohemian woman, with this helm,
Approach'd me, eyed me narrowly, and said:
"Fellow, you seek a helm; I know it well.
Take this one! For a trifle it is yours."
"Go with it to the soldiers," I replied,
"I am a husbandman, and want no helm."
She would not cease, however, and went on:
"None knoweth if he may not want a helm.
A roof of metal for the head just now
Is of more value than a house of stone."
Thus she pursued me closely through the streets,
Still offering the helm, which I refused.
I mark'd it well, and saw that it was bright,
And fair and worthy of a knightly head;
And when in doubt I weigh'd it in my hand,
The strangeness of the incident revolving,
The woman disappear'd, for suddenly
The rushing crowd had carried her away,
And I was left, the helmet in my hand.

JOHAN. (*attempting eagerly to seize it*) Give me the helmet!

BERT. Why, what boots it you?
It is not suited to a maiden's head.

JOHAN. (*seizing it from him*) Mine is the helmet — it belongs to me!

THIB. What whim is this?

RAIM. Nay, let her have her way!
This warlike ornament becomes her well,
For in her bosom beats a manly heart.
Remember how she once subdued the wolf,
The savage monster which destroyed our herds,
And fill'd the neighb'ring shepherds with dismay.
She all alone — the lion-hearted maid —
Fought with the wolf, and from him snatch'd the lamb,
Which he was bearing in his bloody jaws.

How brave soe'er the head this helm adorn'd,
It cannot grace a worthier one than hers!

THIB. (*to* BERTRAND) Relate what new disasters have occurred.
What tidings brought the fugitives?

BERT. May God
Have pity on our land, and save the king!
In two great battles we have lost the day;
Our foes are station'd in the heart of France,
Far as the river Loire our lands are theirs —
Now their whole force they have combined, and lay
Close siege to Orleans.

THIB. God protect the king!

BERT. Artillery is brought from every side,
And as the dusky squadrons of the bees
Swarm round the hive upon a summer day,
As clouds of locusts from the sultry air
Descend and shroud the country round for miles,
So doth the cloud of war, o'er Orleans' fields,
Pour forth its many-nationed multitudes,
Whose varied speech, in wild confusion blent,
With strange and hollow murmurs fills the air.
For Burgundy, the mighty potentate,
Conducts his motley host; the Hennegarians,
The men of Liege and of Luxemburg,
The people of Namur, and those who dwell
In fair Brabant; the wealthy men of Ghent,
Who boast their velvets, and their costly silks;
The Zealanders, whose cleanly towns appear
Emerging from the ocean; Hollanders
Who milk the lowing herds; men from Utrecht,
And even from West Friesland's distant realm,
Who look toward the ice-pole — all combine,
Beneath the banner of the powerful duke,
Together to accomplish Orleans' fall.

THIB. Oh the unblest, the lamentable strife,
Which turns the arms of France against itself!

BERT. E'en she, the mother-queen, proud Isabel —
Bavaria's haughty princess — may be seen,
Array'd in armour, riding through the camp;
With poisonous words of irony she fires
The hostile troops to fury 'gainst her son,
Whom she hath clasp'd to her maternal breast.
THIB. A curse upon her, and may God prepare
For her a death like haughty Jezebel's!
BERT. The fearful Sal'sbury conducts the siege,
The town-destroyer; with him Lionel,
The brother of the lion; Talbot, too,
Who, with his murd'rous weapon, moweth down
The people in the battle: they have sworn
With ruthless insolence to doom to shame
The hapless maidens, and to sacrifice
All who the sword have wielded, with the sword.
Four lofty watch-towers, to o'ertop the town,
They have uprear'd; Earl Sal'sbury from on high
Casteth abroad his cruel, murd'rous glance,
And marks the rapid wanderers in the streets.
Thousands of cannon-balls, of pond'rous weight,
Are hurl'd into the city. Churches lie
In ruin'd heaps, and Notre Dame's royal tower
Begins at length to bow its lofty head.
They also have form'd powder-vaults below,
And thus, above a subterranean hell,
The timid city every hour expects,
'Midst crashing thunder, to break forth in flames.

[JOHANNA *listens with close attention, and places the helmet on her head.*

THIB. But where were then our heroes? Where the swords
Of Saintrailles, and La Hire, and brave Dunois,
Of France the bulwark, that the haughty foe
With such impetuous force thus onward rushed?
Where is the king? Can he supinely see
His kingdom's peril, and his cities' fall?

BERT. The king at Chinon holds his court; he lacks
Soldiers to keep the field. Of what avail
The leader's courage, and the hero's arm,
When pallid fear doth paralyse the host?
A sudden panic, as if sent from God,
Unnerves the courage of the bravest men.
In vain the summons of the king resounds.
As, when the howling of the wolf is heard,
The sheep in terror gather side by side,
So Frenchmen, careless of their ancient fame,
Seek only now the shelter of the towns.
One knight alone, I have been told, has brought
A feeble company, and joins the king
With sixteen banners.

JOHAN. (*quickly*) What's the hero's name?

BERT. 'Tis Baudricour. But much I fear the knight
Will not be able to elude the foe,
Who tracks him closely with two numerous hosts.

JOHAN. Where halts the knight? Pray tell me, if you know.

BERT. About a one day's march from Vaucouleurs.

THIB. (*to* JOHANNA) Why, what is that to thee? Thou dost inquire
Concerning matters which become thee not.

BERT. The foe being now so strong, and from the king
No safety to be hoped, at Vaucouleurs
They have with unanimity resolved
To yield them to the Duke of Burgundy.
Thus we avoid a foreign yoke, and still
Continue by our ancient royal line;
Ay, to the ancient crown we may fall back
Should France and Burgundy be reconcil'd.

JOHAN. (*as if inspired*) Speak not of treaty! Speak not of surrender!
The Saviour comes, he arms him for the fight.

The fortunes of the foe before the walls
Of Orleans shall be wreck'd! His hour is come,
He now is ready for the reaper's hand,
And with her sickle will the maid appear,
And mow to earth the harvest of his pride.
She from the heavens will tear his glory down,
Which he had hung aloft, among the stars;
Despair not! Fly not! for ere yonder corn
Assumes its golden hue, or ere the moon
Displays her perfect orb, no English horse
Shall drink the rolling waters of the Loire.

BERT. Alas! no miracle will happen now!

JOHAN. Yes, there shall yet be one — a snow-white dove
Shall fly, and with the eagle's boldness, tear
The birds of prey, which rend her Fatherland.
She shall o'erthrow this haughty Burgundy,
Betrayer of the kingdom; Talbot, too,
The hundred-handed, heaven-defying scourge;
This Sal'sbury, who violates our fanes,
And all these island robbers shall she drive
Before her like a flock of timid lambs.
The Lord will be with her, the God of battle;
A weak and trembling creature he will choose,
And through a tender maid proclaim his power,
For he is the Almighty!

THIB. What strange power
Hath seized the maiden?

RAIM. Doubtless 'tis the helm
Which doth inspire her with such martial thoughts.
Look at your daughter. Mark her flashing eye,
Her glowing cheek, which kindles as with fire!

JOHAN. This realm shall fall! This ancient land of fame,
The fairest that, in his majestic course,
Th' eternal sun surveys — this paradise,
Which, as the apple of his eye, God loves —

Endure the fetters of a foreign yoke?
— Here were the heathen scatter'd, and the cross
And holy image were planted here;
Here rest Saint Louis' ashes, and from hence
The troops went forth, who set Jerusalem free.

BERT. *(in astonishment)* Hark how she speaks!
Why, whence can she obtain
This glorious revelation? — Father Arc!
A wond'rous daughter God hath given you!

JOHAN. We shall no longer serve a native prince!
The king, who never dies, shall pass away —
The guardian of the sacred plough, who fills
The earth with plenty, who protects our herds,
Who frees the bondmen from captivity,
Who gathers all his cities round his throne —
Who aids the helpless, and appals the base,
Who envies no one, for he reigns supreme;
Who is a mortal, yet an angel too,
Dispensing mercy on the hostile earth.
For the king's throne, which glitters o'er with gold,
Affords a shelter for the destitute; —
Power and compassion meet together there,
The guilty tremble, but the just draw near,
And with the guardian lion fearless sport!
The stranger king, who cometh from afar,
Whose fathers' sacred ashes do not lie
Interr'd among us; can he love our land?
Who was not young among our youth, whose heart
Respondeth not to our familiar words,
Can he be as a father to our sons?

THIB. God save the king and France! We're
peaceful folk
Who neither wield the sword, nor rein the steed.
— Let us await the king whom victory crowns;
The fate of battle is the voice of God.
He is our lord who crowns himself at Rheims,
And on his head receives the holy oil.

—Come, now to work! come! and let every one
Think only of the duty of the hour!
Let the earth's great ones for the earth contend,
Untroubled we may view the desolation,
For steadfast stand the acres which we till.
The flames consume our villages, our corn
Is trampled 'neath the tread of warlike steeds;
With the new spring new harvests reappear,
And our light huts are quickly rear'd again!

[*They all retire, except the Maiden.*

Scene IV.

JOHAN. (*alone*) Farewell, ye mountains, ye beloved glades,
Ye lone and peaceful valleys, fare ye well!
Through you Johanna never more may stray!
For aye Johanna bids you now farewell.
Ye meads which I have water'd and ye trees
Which I have planted, still in beauty bloom!
Farewell ye grottos, and ye crystal springs!
Sweet echo, vocal spirit of the vale,
Who sang'st responsive to my simple strain,
Johanna goes, and ne'er returns again.

Ye scenes where all my tranquil joys I knew,
For ever now I leave you far behind!
Poor foldless lambs, no shepherd now have you!
O'er the wide heath stray henceforth unconfin'd!
For I to danger's field, of crimson hue,
Am summon'd hence, another flock to find.
Such is to me the Spirit's high behest;
No earthly vain ambition fires my breast.

For who in glory did on Horeb's height
Descend to Moses in the bush of flame,

And bade him go and stand in Pharaoh's sight —
Who once to Israel's pious shepherd came,
And sent him forth, his champion in the fight, —
Who aye hath loved the lowly shepherd train, —
He, from these leafy boughs, thus spake to me,
"Go forth! Thou shalt on earth my witness be.

"Thou in rude armour must thy limbs invest,
A plate of steel upon thy bosom wear;
Vain earthly love may never stir thy breast,
Nor passion's sinful glow be kindled there.
Ne'er with the bride-wreath shall thy locks be dress'd,
Nor on thy bosom bloom an infant fair;
But war's triumphant glory shall be thine;
Thy martial fame all women's shall outshine.

"For when in fight the stoutest hearts despair,
When direful ruin threatens France, forlorn,
Then thou aloft my oriflamme shalt bear,
And swiftly as the reaper mows the corn,
Thou shalt lay low the haughty conqueror;
His fortune's wheel thou rapidly shalt turn,
To Gaul's heroic sons deliv'rance bring,
Relieve beleaguer'd Rheims, and crown thy king!"

The heavenly Spirit promised me a sign;
He sends the helmet, it hath come from him.
Its iron filleth me with strength divine,
I feel the courage of the cherubim;
As with the rushing of a mighty wind
It drives me forth to join the battle's din;
The clanging trumpets sound, the chargers rear,
And the loud war-cry thunders in mine ear.

[*She goes out.*

ACT I.

SCENE I.

The Royal Residence at Chinon.

DUNOIS *and* DU CHATEL.

DUNOIS. No longer I'll endure it. I renounce
This recreant monarch who forsakes himself.
My valiant heart doth bleed, and I could rain
Hot tear-drops from mine eyes, that robber-swords
Partition thus the royal realm of France;
That cities, ancient as the monarchy,
Deliver to the foe the rusty keys,
While here in idle and inglorious ease
We lose the precious season of redemption.
— Tidings of Orleans' peril reach mine ear,
Hither I sped from distant Normandy,
Thinking, arrayed in panoply of war,
To find the monarch with his marshall'd hosts;
And find him — here! begirt with troubadours,
And juggling knaves, engaged in solving riddles,
And planning festivals in Sorel's honour,
As brooded o'er the land profoundest peace!
— The constable hath gone, he will not brook
Longer the spectacle of shame. — I too
Depart, and leave him to his evil fate.

DU CHAT. Here comes the king.

Scene II.

King Charles. *The same.*

Chas. The constable hath sent us back his sword
And doth renounce our service. Now, by Heaven!
He thus hath rid us of a churlish man,
Who insolently sought to lord it o'er us.
Dunois. A man is precious in such perilous times;
I would not deal thus lightly with his loss.
Chas. Thou speakest thus from love of opposition;
While he was here, thou never wert his friend.
Dunois. He was a tiresome, proud, vexatious fool,
Who never could resolve. — For once, however,
He hath resolved. Betimes he goeth hence,
Where honour can no longer be achieved.
Chas. Thou'rt in a pleasant humour; undisturb'd
I'll leave thee to enjoy it. — Hark, Du Chatel!
Ambassadors are here from old king René,
Of tuneful song the master, far renowned.
— Let them as honour'd guests be entertain'd,
And unto each present a chain of gold.
[*To the Bastard.*
Why smilest thou, Dunois?
Dunois. That from thy mouth
Thou shakest golden chains.
Du Chat. Alas! my king!
No gold existeth in thy treasury.
Chas. Then gold must be procured. — It must not be
That bards unhonour'd from our court depart.
'Tis they who make our barren sceptre bloom,
'Tis they who wreathe around our fruitless crown
Life's joyous branch, of never-fading green.
Reigning, they justly rank themselves as kings,
Of gentle wishes they erect their throne,

Their harmless realm existeth not in space;
Hence should the bard accompany the king,
Life's higher sphere the heritage of both!
DU CHAT. My royal liege! I sought to spare thine ear
So long as aid and counsel could be found;
Now dire necessity doth loose my tongue.
— Nought hast thou now in presents to bestow,
Thou hast not wherewithal to live to-morrow!
The spring-tide of thy fortune is run out,
And lowest ebb is in thy treasury!
The soldiers, disappointed of their pay,
With sullen murmurs, threaten to retire.
My counsel faileth, not with royal splendour
But meagerly, to furnish out thy household.
CHAS. My royal customs pledge, and borrow gold
From the Lombardians.
DU CHAT. Sire, thy revenues,
Thy royal customs, are for three years pledg'd.
DUNOIS. And pledge meanwhile and kingdom both are lost.
CHAS. Still many rich and beauteous lands are ours.
DUNOIS. So long as God and Talbot's sword permit!
When Orleans falleth into English hands
Then with King René thou may'st tend thy sheep!
CHAS. Still at this king thou lov'st to point thy jest;
Yet 'tis this lackland monarch, who to-day
Hath with a princely crown invested me.
DUNOIS. Not, in the name of Heaven, with that of Naples,
Which is for sale, I hear, since he kept sheep.
CHAS. It is a sportive festival, a jest,
Wherein he giveth to his fancy play,
To found a world all innocent and pure
In this barbaric, rude reality.

Yet noble — ay, right royal is his aim!
He will again restore the golden age,
When gentle manners reigned, when faithful love
The heroic hearts of valiant knights inspired,
And noble women, whose accomplished taste
Diffuseth grace around, in judgment sat.
The old man dwelleth in those bygone times,
And in our work-day world would realise
The dreams of ancient bards, who picture life
'Mid bowers celestial, thron'd on golden clouds.
He hath established hence a court of love,
Where valiant knights may dwell, and homage yield
To noble women, who are there enthroned,
And where pure love and true may find a home.
Me he hath chosen as the Prince of Love.

DUNOIS. I am not such a base degenerate churl,
As Love's dominion rudely to assail.
I am her son, from her derive my name,
And in her kingdom lies my heritage.
The prince of Orleans was my sire, and while
No woman's heart was proof against his love,
No hostile fortress could withstand his shock!
Wilt thou, indeed, with honour name thyself
The Prince of Love — be bravest of the brave!
As I have read in these old chronicles,
Love aye went coupled with heroic deeds,
And valiant heroes, not inglorious shepherds,
So legends tell us, graced King Arthur's board.
The man whose valour is not beauty's shield,
Is all unworthy of her golden prize.
Here the arena! — combat for the crown,
Thy royal heritage! — with knightly sword
Thy lady's honour and thy realm defend —
And hast thou with hot valour snatch'd the crown
From streams of hostile blood, — then is the time,
And it would well become thee as a prince,
Love's myrtle chaplet round thy brows to wreathe.

CHAS. (*to a* PAGE, *who enters*) What is the matter?
PAGE. Senators from Orleans
Entreat an audience, Sire.
CHAS. Conduct them hither!
[PAGE *retires.*
Doubtless they succour need; what can I do,
Myself all-succourless!

SCENE III.

The same. Three SENATORS.

CHAS. Welcome, my trusty citizens of Orleans!
What tidings bring ye from my faithful town?
Doth she continue with her wonted zeal
Still bravely to withstand the leaguering foe?
SENAT. Ah, Sire! the city's peril is extreme;
And giant ruin, waxing hour by hour,
Still onward strides. The bulwarks are destroyed —
The foe, at each assault, advantage gains;
Bare of defenders are the city walls,
For with rash valour forth our soldiers rush,
While few, alas! return to view their homes,
And famine's scourge impendeth o'er the town.
In this extremity, the noble Count
Of Rochepierre, commander of the town,
Hath made a compact with the enemy,
According to old custom, to yield up,
On the twelfth day, the city to the foe,
Unless, meanwhile, before the town appear
A host of magnitude to raise the siege.
[DUNOIS *manifests the strongest indignation.*
CHAS. The interval is brief.
SENAT. We hither come,
Attended by a hostile retinue,
To implore thee, Sire, to pity thy poor town,

And to send succour ere the appointed day,
When, if still unrelieved, she must surrender.
DUNOIS. And could Saintrailles consent to give his voice
To such a shameful compact?
SENAT. Never, sir.
Long as the hero liv'd, none dared to breathe
A single word of treaty, or surrender.
DUNOIS. He then is dead?
SENAT. The noble hero fell,
His monarch's cause defending, on our walls.
CHAS. What! Saintrailles dead! Oh, in that single man
A host is founder'd!
[*A Knight enters and speaks apart with* DUNOIS, *who starts with surprise.*
DUNOIS. That too!
CHAS. Well! What is it?
DUNOIS. Count Douglas sendeth here. The Scottish troops
Revolt, and threaten to retire at once,
Unless their full arrears are paid to-day.
CHAS. Du Chatel!
DU CHAT. (*shrugs his shoulders*) Sire! I know not what to counsel.
CHAS. Pledge, promise all, even unto half my realm. —
DU CHAT. 'Tis vain! They have been fed with hope too often!
CHAS. They are the finest troops of all my host!
They must not now, not now abandon me.
SENAT. (*throwing himself at the* KING'S *feet*) Oh, king, assist us! Think of our distress!
CHAS. (*in despair*) How! Can I summon armies from the earth?
Or grow a cornfield on my open palm?
Rend me in pieces! — Pluck my bleeding heart

Forth from my breast, and coin it 'stead of gold!
I've blood for you, but neither coin, nor troops.
[*He sees* SOREL *approach, and hastens toward her with outstretched arms.*

SCENE IV.

The same. AGNES SOREL, *a casket in her hand.*

CHAS. My Agnes! Oh, my love! my dearest life!
Thou comest here to snatch me from despair!
Refuge I take within thy loving arms;
Possessing thee, I feel that nought is lost.
SOREL. My king, beloved!
[*Looking around with an anxious, inquiring gaze.*
Dunois! Say, is it true,
Du Chatel?
DU CHAT. 'Tis alas!
SOREL. So great the need?
No treasure left? The soldiers will disband?
DU CHAT. Alas! it is too true!
SOREL. (*giving him the casket*) Here — here is gold,
Here too are jewels! Melt my silver down!
Sell, pledge my castles — on my fair domains
In Provence, treasure raise — turn all to gold,
Appease the troops! No time is to be lost!
[*She urges him to depart.*
CHAS. Well now, Dunois! Du Chatel! Do ye still
Account me poor, when I possess the crown
Of womankind? — She's nobly born as I;
The royal blood of Valois not more pure;
The most exalted throne she would adorn —
Yet she rejects it with disdain, and claims
No other title than to be my love.
No gift more costly will she e'er receive
Than early flower in winter, or rare fruit!

No sacrifice, on my part, she permits,
Yet sacrificeth all she hath to me!
With generous spirit she doth venture all
Her wealth and fortune in my sinking bark.

DUNOIS. Ay, she is mad indeed, my king, as thou;
She throws her all into a burning house,
And draweth water in the leaky vessel
Of the Danaïdes. Thee she will not save,
And in thy ruin but involve herself. —

SOREL. Believe him not! Full many a time he hath
Perill'd his life for thee, and now, forsooth,
Chafeth, because I risk my worthless gold!
How? Have I freely sacrificed to thee
What is esteemed far more than gold and pearls,
And shall I now hold back the gifts of fortune?
Oh, come! Let my example challenge thee
To noble self-denial! Let's at once
Cast off the needless ornaments of life!
Thy courtiers metamorphose into soldiers;
Thy gold transmute to iron; all thou hast,
With resolute daring, venture for thy crown!
Peril and want we will participate!
Let us bestride the war-horse, and expose
Our tender person to the fiery glow
Of the hot sun, take for our canopy
The clouds above, and make the stones our pillow.
The rudest warrior, when he sees his king
Bear hardship and privation like the meanest,
Will patiently endure his own hard lot!

CHAS. (*laughing*) Ay! now is realised an ancient word
Of prophecy, once uttered by a nun
Of Clairmont, in prophetic mood, who said,
That through a woman's aid I o'er my foes
Should triumph, and achieve my father's crown.
Far off I sought her in the English camp;

I strove to reconcile a mother's heart;
Here stands the heroine — my guide to Rheims!
My Agnes! I shall triumph through thy love!
SOREL. Thou'lt triumph through the valiant swords of friends.
CHAS. And from my foes' dissensions much I hope —
For sure intelligence hath reach'd mine ear,
That 'twixt these English lords and Burgundy
Things do not stand precisely as they did; —
Hence to the duke I have despatch'd La Hire,
To try if he can lead my angry vassal
Back to his ancient loyalty and faith: —
Each moment now I look for his return.
DU CHAT. (*at the window*) A knight e'en now dismounteth in the court.
CHAS. A welcome messenger! We soon shall learn
Whether we're doomed to conquer or to yield.

SCENE V.

The same. LA HIRE.

CHAS. (*meeting him*) Hope bringest thou, or not? Be brief, La Hire!
Out with thy tidings! What must we expect?
HIRE. Expect nought, Sire, save from thine own good sword.
CHAS. The haughty duke will not be reconciled!
Speak! How did he receive my embassy?
HIRE. His first and unconditional demand,
Ere he consent to listen to thine errand,
Is that Du Chatel be deliver'd up,
Whom he doth name the murderer of his sire.
CHAS. This base condition we reject with scorn!

HIRE. Then be the league dissolved ere it commence!

CHAS. Hast thou thereon, as I commanded thee,
Challenged the duke to meet me in fair fight
On Montereau's bridge, whereon his father fell?

HIRE. Before him on the ground I flung thy glove,
And said: — "Thou wouldst forget thy majesty,
And like a knight do battle for thy realm."
He scornfully rejoined — "He needed not
To fight for that which he possess'd already.
But if thou wert so eager for the fray,
Before the walls of Orleans thou wouldst find him,
Whither he purposed going on the morrow;"
Thereon he laughing turn'd his back upon me.

CHAS. Say, did not justice raise her sacred voice,
Within the precincts of my parliament?

HIRE. The rage of party, Sire, hath silenc'd her.
An edict of the parliament declares
Thee, and thy race, excluded from the throne.

DUNOIS. These upstart burghers' haughty insolence!

CHAS. Hast thou attempted with my mother aught?

HIRE. With her?

CHAS. Ay! How did she demean herself?

HIRE. (*after a few moments' reflection*) I chanced to step within St. Denis' walls
Precisely at the royal coronation.
The crowds were dress'd as for a festival;
Triumphal arches rose in every street
Through which the English monarch was to pass.
The way was strewed with flowers, and with huzzas,
As France some brilliant conquest had achieved,
The people thronged around the royal car.

SOREL. They could huzza — huzza, while trampling thus
Upon a gracious sovereign's loving heart!

HIRE. I saw young Harry Lancaster — the boy —
On good St. Lewis' regal chair enthroned;

On either side his haughty uncles stood,
Bedford and Gloucester, and before him kneeled,
To render homage for his lands, Duke Philip.
CHAS. O peer dishonour'd! O unworthy cousin!
HIRE. The child was timid, and his footing lost
As up the steps he mounted toward the throne.
An evil omen! murmured forth the crowd,
And scornful laughter burst on every side.
Then forward stepped Queen Isabel — thy mother,
And — but it angers me to utter it!
CHAS. Say on.
HIRE. Within her arms she clasped the boy,
And herself placed him on thy father's throne.
CHAS. Oh, mother! mother!
HIRE. E'en the murderous bands
Of the Burgundians, at this spectacle,
Evinced some tokens of indignant shame.
The queen perceived it, and addressed the crowds,
Exclaiming with loud voice: "Be grateful, Frenchmen,
That I engraft upon a sickly stock
A healthy scion, and redeem you from
The misbegotten son of a mad sire!"

[*The* KING *hides his face; Agnes hastens toward him and clasps him in her arms; all the bystanders express aversion and horror.*

DUNOIS. She-wolf of France! Rage-breathing Megara!
CHAS. (*after a pause, to the* SENATORS) Yourselves have heard the posture of affairs.
Delay no longer, back return to Orleans,
And bear this message to my faithful town:
I do absolve my subjects from their oath,
Their own best interests let them now consult,
And yield them to the Duke of Burgundy;
'Yclept the Good, he needs must prove humane.
DUNOIS. What say'st thou, Sire? Thou wilt abandon Orleans!

SENAT. (*kneels down*) My king! Abandon not thy
faithful town!
Consign her not to England's harsh control;
She is a precious jewel in thy crown,
And none hath more inviolate faith maintain'd
Toward the kings, thy royal ancestors.
DUNOIS. Have we been routed? Is it lawful,
Sire,
To leave the English masters of the field,
Without a single stroke to save the town?
And thinkest thou, with careless breath, forsooth,
Ere blood hath flowed, rashly to give away
The fairest city from the heart of France?
CHAS. Blood hath been poured forth freely, and in
vain!
The hand of Heaven is visibly against me;
In every battle is my host o'erthrown,
I am rejected of my parliament,
My capital, my people, hail my foe,
Those of my blood, — my nearest relatives, —
Forsake me and betray — and my own mother
Doth nurture at her breast the hostile brood.
— Beyond the Loire we will retire, and yield
To the o'ermastering hand of destiny
Which sideth with the English.
SOREL. God forbid
That we in weak despair should quit this realm!
This utterance came not from thy heart, my king,
Thy noble heart, which hath been sorely riven
By the fell deed of thy unnatural mother!
Thou'lt be thyself again, right valiantly
Thou'lt battle with thine adverse destiny,
Which doth oppose thee with relentless ire.
CHAS. (*lost in gloomy thought*) Is it not true? A
dark and ominous doom
Impendeth o'er the Heaven-abandon'd house
Of Valois — there preside the avenging powers,

To whom a mother's crimes unbarr'd the way.
For thirty years my sire in madness rav'd;
Already have three elder brothers been
Mow'd down by death; 'tis the decree of Heaven,
The house of the Sixth Charles is doom'd to fall.

SOREL. In thee 'twill rise with renovated life!
Oh, in thyself have faith! — Believe me, king,
Not vainly hath a gracious destiny
Redeem'd thee from the ruin of thy house,
And by thy brethren's death exalted thee,
The youngest born, to an unlook'd-for throne.
Heaven in thy gentle spirit hath prepared
The leech to remedy the thousand ills
By party rage inflicted on the land.
The flames of civil discord thou wilt quench,
And my heart tells me, thou'lt establish peace,
And found anew the monarchy of France.

CHAS. Not I! The rude and storm-vexed times require
A pilot formed by nature to command.
A peaceful nation I could render happy,
A wild rebellious people not subdue.
I never with the sword could open hearts
Against me closed in hatred's cold reserve.

SOREL. The people's eye is dimm'd, an error blinds them
But this delusion will not long endure;
The day is not far distant, when the love,
Deep rooted in the bosom of the French,
Toward their native monarch will revive,
Together with the ancient jealousy,
Which forms a barrier 'twixt the hostile nations.
The haughty foe precipitates his doom.
Hence, with rash haste abandon not the field,
With dauntless front contest each foot of ground,
As thine own heart defend the town of Orleans!
Let every boat be sunk beneath the wave,

Each bridge be burned, sooner than carry thee
Across the Loire, the bound'ry of thy realm,
The Stygian flood, o'er which there's no return.
CHAS. What could be done I have done. I have offer'd,
In single fight, to combat for my crown. —
I was refused. In vain my people bleed,
In vain my towns are levell'd with the dust.
Shall I, like that unnatural mother, see
My child in pieces severed with the sword?
No; I forego my claim, that it may live.
DUNOIS. How, Sire! Is this fit language for a king?
Is a crown thus renounced? Thy meanest subject,
For his opinion's sake, his hate and love,
Sets property and life upon a cast;
When civil war hangs out her bloody flag
Each private end is drowned in party zeal.
The husbandman forsakes his plough, the wife
Neglects her distaff; children, and old men,
Don the rude garb of war; the citizen
Consigns his town to the devouring flames,
The peasant burns the produce of his fields;
And all to injure or advantage thee,
And to achieve the purpose of his heart.
Men show no mercy, and they wish for none,
When they at honour's call maintain the fight,
Or for their idols or their gods contend.
A truce to such effeminate pity, then,
Which is not suited to a monarch's breast.
— Thou didst not heedlessly provoke the war:
As it commenced, so let it spend its fury.
It is the law of destiny that nations
Should for their monarchs immolate themselves,
We Frenchmen recognise this sacred law,
Nor would annul it. Base, indeed, the nation,
That for its honour ventures not its all.

CHAS. (*to the* SENATORS) You've heard my last resolve — expect no other.
May God protect you! I can do no more.

DUNOIS. As thou dost turn thy back upon thy realm,
So may the God of battle aye avert
His visage from thee. Thou forsak'st thyself,
So I forsake thee. Not the power combined
Of England and rebellious Burgundy,
Thy own mean spirit hurls thee from the throne.
Born heroes ever were the kings of France;
Thou wert a craven even from thy birth.
[*To the* SENATORS.
The king abandons you. But I will throw
Myself into your town — my father's town —
And 'neath its ruins find a soldier's grave.

[*He is about to depart.* — AGNES SOREL *detains him.*

SOREL (*to the* KING) Oh let him not depart in anger from thee!
Harsh words his lips have utter'd, but his heart
Is true as gold. 'Tis he, himself, my king,
Who loves thee, and hath often bled for thee.
Dunois! confess, the heat of noble wrath
Made thee forget thyself — and oh, do thou
Forgive a faithful friend's o'erhasty speech!
Come! let me quickly reconcile your hearts,
Ere anger bursteth forth in quenchless flame!

[DUNOIS *looks fixedly at the* KING, *and appears to await an answer.*

CHAS. Our way lies over the Loire. Du Chatel!
See all our equipage embarked.

DUNOIS. (*quickly to* SOREL) Farewell!

[*He turns quickly around, and goes out. The* SENATORS *follow.*

SOREL. (*wringing her hands in despair*) O, if he goes, we are forsaken quite!
— Follow, La Hire! O seek to soften him!
[LA HIRE *goes out.*

SCENE VI.

CHARLES, SOREL, DU CHATEL.

CHAS. Is, then, the sceptre such a peerless treasure?
Is it so hard to loose it from our grasp?
Believe me, 'tis more galling to endure
The domineering rule of these proud vassals.
To be dependent on their will and pleasure,
Is, to a noble heart, more bitter far
Than to submit to fate.
[*To* DU CHATEL, *who still lingers.*
Du Chatel, go
And do what I commanded!

DU CHAT. (*throws himself at the* KING'S *feet*)
Oh, my king!

CHAS. No more! Thou'st heard my absolute resolve!

DU CHAT. Sire! with the Duke of Burgundy make peace!
'Tis the sole outlet from destruction left!

CHAS. Thou giv'st this counsel, and thy blood alone
Can ratify this peace?

DU CHAT. Here is my head.
I oft have risked it for thee in the fight,
And with a joyful spirit I, for thee,
Would lay it down upon the block of death.
Conciliate the duke! Deliver me
To the full measure of his wrath, and let
My flowing blood appease the ancient hate!

CHAS. (*looks at him for some time in silence, and with deep emotion*)
Can it be true? Am I, then, sunk so low,
That even friends, who read my inmost heart,
Point out, for my escape, the path of shame?

Yes, now I recognise my abject fall.
My honour is no more confided in.
DU CHAT. Reflect —
CHAS. Be silent, and incense me not! —
Had I ten realms, on which to turn my back,
With my friend's life I would not purchase them.
— Do what I have commanded. Hence, and see
My equipage embarked.
DU CHAT. 'Twill speedily
Be done.

[*He stands up and retires.* — AGNES SOREL *weeps passionately.*

SCENE VII.

The Royal Palace at Chinon.

CHARLES, AGNES SOREL.

CHAS. (*seizing the hand of* AGNES) My Agnes, be not sorrowful!
Beyond the Loire we still shall find a France;
We are departing to a happier land,
Where laughs a milder, an unclouded sky,
And gales more genial blow; we there shall meet
More gentle manners; song abideth there,
And love and life in richer beauty bloom.
SOREL. Oh, must I contemplate this day of woe!
The king must roam in banishment! the son
Depart, an exile, from his father's house,
And turn his back upon his childhood's home!
O pleasant, happy land, that we forsake,
Ne'er shall we tread thee joyously again!

Scene VIII.

La Hire *returns;* Charles, Sorel.

Sorel. You come alone? You do not bring him back? [*Observing him more closely.*
La Hire! What news? What does that look announce?
Some new calamity?
Hire. Calamity
Hath spent itself; sunshine is now return'd.
Sorel. What is it? I implore you.
Hire. (*to the* King) Summon back
The delegates from Orleans!
Chas. Why? What is it?
Hire. Summon them back! Thy fortune is reversed.
A battle has been fought, and thou hast conquer'd.
Sorel. Conquer'd! O heavenly music of that word.
Chas. La Hire! A fabulous report deceives thee:
Conquer'd! — In conquest I believe no more.
Hire. Still greater wonders thou wilt soon believe.
— Here cometh the archbishop. To thine arms
He leadeth back Dunois. —
Sorel. O beauteous flower
Of victory, which doth the heavenly fruits
Of peace and reconcilement bear at once!

Scene IX.

The same. Archbishop of Rheims, Dunois, Du Chatel, *with* Raoul, *a Knight in armour.*

Archb. (*leading* Dunois *to the* King, *and joining their hands*)
Princes, embrace! Let rage and discord cease,
Since Heaven itself hath for our cause declared.
[Dunois *embraces the* King.
Chas. Relieve my wonder and perplexity.
What may this solemn earnestness portend?
Whence this unlook'd-for change of fortune?
Archb. (*leads the Knight forward, and presents him to the* King) Speak!
Raoul. We had assembled sixteen regiments
Of Lotharingian troops, to join your host;
And Baudricourt, a knight of Vaucouleurs,
Was our commander. Having gain'd the heights
By Vermanton, we wound our downward way
Into the valley water'd by the Yonne;
There, in the plain before us, lay the foe,
And when we turn'd, arms glitter'd in our rear.
We saw ourselves surrounded by two hosts,
And could not hope for conquest or for flight.
Then sank the bravest heart, and in despair
We all prepared to lay our weapons down.
The leaders with each other anxiously
Sought counsel and found none, — when to our eyes
A spectacle of wonder show'd itself!
For suddenly from forth the thickets' depths
A maiden, on her head a polish'd helm,
Like a war-goddess, issued; terrible
Yet lovely was her aspect, and her hair

Joan's beauty

In dusky ringlets round her shoulders fell.
A heavenly radiance shone around the height;
When she upraised her voice and thus address'd us:
"Why be dismay'd, brave Frenchmen? On the foe!
Were they more numerous than the ocean sands,
God and the holy Maiden lead you on!"
Then quickly from the standard-bearer's hand
She snatch'd the banner, and before our troop
With valiant bearing strode the wond'rous maid.
Silent with awe, scarce knowing what we did,
The banner and the Maiden we pursue,
And, fired with ardour, rush upon the foe,
Who, much amazed, stand motionless and view
The miracle with fix'd and wondering gaze. —
Then, as if seized by terror sent from God,
They suddenly betake themselves to flight,
And, casting arms and armour to the ground,
Disperse in wild disorder o'er the field.
No leader's call, no signal now avails;
Senseless from terror, without looking back,
Horses and men plunge headlong in the stream,
Where they without resistance are despatch'd.
It was a slaughter rather than a fight!
Two thousand of the foe bestrew'd the field,
Not reckoning numbers swallow'd by the flood,
While of our company not one was slain.

CHAS. 'Tis strange, by Heaven! most wonderful and strange!

SOREL. A maiden work'd this miracle, you say?
Whence did she come? Who is she?

RAOUL. Who she is
She will reveal to no one but the king!
She calls herself a seer and prophetess
Ordain'd by God, and promises to raise
The siege of Orleans ere the moon shall change.
The people credit her, and thirst for war.

The host she follows — she'll be here anon.

[*The ringing of bells is heard, together with the clang of arms.*

Hark to the din! The pealing of the bells!
'Tis she! The people greet God's messenger.

CHAS. (*to* DU CHATEL) Conduct her hither. —

[*To the* ARCHBISHOP.

What should I believe?
A maiden brings me conquest even now,
When nought can save me but a hand divine!
This is not in the common course of things.
And dare I here believe a miracle?

MANY VOICES. (*behind the scene*) Hail to the Maiden! — the deliverer!

CHAS. She comes! Dunois, now occupy my place!
We will make trial of this wond'rous maid.
Is she indeed inspired and sent by God,
She will be able to discern the king.

[DUNOIS *seats himself; the* KING *stands at his right hand,* AGNES SOREL *near him, the* ARCHBISHOP *and the others opposite; so that the intermediate space remains vacant.*

SCENE X.

The same. JOHANNA, *accompanied by the Councillors and many Knights, who occupy the background of the scene; she advances with noble bearing, and slowly surveys the company.*

DUNOIS. (*after a long and solemn pause*) Art thou the wondrous Maiden —

JOHAN. (*interrupts him, regarding him with dignity*)
Bastard of Orleans, thou wilt tempt thy God!
This place abandon, which becomes thee not!
To this more mighty one the Maid is sent.

[*With a firm step she approaches the* KING, *bows one knee before him, and, rising immediately, steps back. All present express their astonishment,* DUNOIS *forsakes his seat, which is occupied by the* KING.

CHAS. Maiden, thou ne'er hast seen my face before.
Whence hast thou then this knowledge?

JOHAN. Thee I saw
When none beside, save God in heaven, beheld thee.

[*She approaches the* KING *and speaks mysteriously.*
Bethink thee, dauphin, in the bygone night!
When all around lay buried in deep sleep,
Thou from thy couch didst rise and offer up
An earnest prayer to God. Let these retire
And I will name the subject of thy prayer.

CHAS. What I to Heaven confided need not be
From men conceal'd. Disclose to me my prayer,
And I shall doubt no more that God inspires thee.

JOHAN. Three prayers thou offer'dst, dauphin; listen now
Whether I name them to thee! Thou didst pray
That if there were appended to this crown
Unjust possession, or if heavy guilt
Not yet atoned for, from thy father's times,
Occasion'd this most lamentable war,
God would accept thee as a sacrifice,
Have mercy on thy people, and pour forth
Upon thy head the chalice of his wrath.

CHAS. (*steps back with awe*) Who art thou, mighty one? Whence comest thou?

[*All express their astonishment.*

JOHAN. To God thou offeredst this second prayer:
That if it were his will and high decree
To take away the sceptre from thy race,
And from thee to withdraw whate'er thy sires,
The monarchs of this kingdom, once possess'd,
He in his mercy would preserve to thee

Three priceless treasures — a contented heart,
Thy friend's affection, and thine Agnes' love.
[*The* KING *conceals his face: the spectators express their astonishment. — After a pause.*
Thy third petition shall I name to thee?
CHAS. Enough — I credit thee! This doth surpass
Mere human knowledge: thou art sent by God!
ARCHB. Who art thou, wonderful and holy maid?
What favour'd region bore thee? What blest pair,
Belov'd of Heaven, may claim thee as their child?
JOHAN. Most reverend father, I am nam'd Johanna,
I am a shepherd's lowly daughter, born
In Dom Remi, a village of my king,
Included in the diocese of Toul,
And from a child I kept my father's sheep.
— And much and frequently I heard them tell
Of the strange islanders, who o'er the sea
Had come to make us slaves, and on us force
A foreign lord, who loveth not the people;
How the great city, Paris, they had seized,
And had usurp'd dominion o'er the realm.
Then earnestly God's Mother I implor'd
To save us from the shame of foreign chains,
And to preserve to us our lawful king.
Not distant from my native village stands
An ancient image of the Virgin blest,
To which the pious pilgrims oft repair'd;
Hard by a holy oak, of blessed power,
Standeth, far-fam'd through wonders manifold.
Beneath the oak's broad shade I loved to sit,
Tending my flock — my heart still drew me there.
And if by chance among the desert hills
A lambkin strayed, 'twas shown me in a dream,
When in the shadow of this oak I slept.
— And once, when through the night beneath this tree
In pious adoration I had sat,

Resisting sleep, the Holy One appear'd,
Bearing a sword and banner, otherwise
Clad like a shepherdess, and thus she spake: —
"'Tis I; arise, Johanna! leave thy flock.
The Lord appoints thee to another task!
Receive this banner! Gird thee with this sword!
Therewith exterminate my people's foes;
Conduct to Rheims thy royal master's son,
And crown him with the kingly diadem!"
And I made answer: "How may I presume
To undertake such deeds, a tender maid,
Unpractis'd in the dreadful art of war!"
And she replied: "A maiden pure and chaste
Achieves whate'er on earth is glorious,
If she to earthly love ne'er yields her heart.
Look upon me! a virgin, like thyself;
I to the Christ, the Lord divine, gave birth,
And am myself divine!" — Mine eyelids then
She touch'd, and when I upward turn'd my gaze,
Heaven's wide expanse was fill'd with angel-boys,
Who bore white lilies in their hands, while tones
Of sweetest music floated through the air.
— And thus on three successive nights appear'd
The Holy One, and cried — "Arise, Johanna!
The Lord appoints thee to another task!"
And when the third night she reveal'd herself,
Wrathful she seem'd, and chiding spake these words:
"Obedience, woman's duty here on earth;
Severe endurance is her heavy doom;
She must be purified through discipline;
Who serveth here is glorified above!"
While thus she spake, she let her shepherd garb
Fall from her, and as Queen of Heaven stood forth,
Enshrined in radiant light, while golden clouds
Upbore her slowly to the realms of bliss.

[*All are moved;* AGNES SOREL, *weeping, hides her face on the bosom of the* KING.

ARCHB. (*after a long pause*) Before divine credentials such as these
Each doubt of earthly prudence must subside.
Her deeds attest the truth of what she speaks,
For God alone such wonders can achieve.
DUNOIS. I credit not her wonders, but her eyes,
Which beam with innocence and purity.
CHAS. Am I, a sinner, worthy of such favour?
Infallible, All-searching Eye, thou seest
Mine inmost heart, my deep humility!
JOHAN. Humility shines brightly in the skies;
Thou art abased, hence God exalteth thee.
CHAS. Shall I indeed withstand mine enemies?
JOHAN. France I will lay submissive at thy feet!
CHAS. And Orleans, say'st thou, will not be surrender'd?
JOHAN. The Loire shall sooner roll its waters back.
CHAS. Shall I in triumph enter into Rheims?
JOHAN. I through ten thousand foes will lead thee there.

[*The Knights make a noise with their lances and shields, and evince signs of courage.*

DUNOIS. Appoint the Maiden to command the host!
We follow blindly whereso'er she leads:
The holy one's prophetic eye shall guide,
And this brave sword from danger shall protect her!
HIRE. A universe in arms we will not fear,
If she, the mighty one, precede our troops.
The God of battle walketh by her side;
Let her conduct us on to victory!

[*The Knights clang their arms and press forward.*

CHAS. Yes, holy Maiden, do thou lead mine host;
My chiefs and warriors shall submit to thee.
This sword of matchless temper, proved in war,
Sent back in anger by the constable,
Hath found a hand more worthy. Prophetess,
Do thou receive it, and henceforward be —

JOHAN. No, noble dauphin! conquest to my liege
Is not accorded through this instrument
Of earthly might. I know another sword
Wherewith I am to conquer, which to thee,
I, as the Spirit taught, will indicate;
Let it be hither brought.
CHAS. Name it, Johanna.
JOHAN. Send to the ancient town of Fierbois;
There in Saint Catherine's churchyard is a vault
Where lie in heaps the spoils of bygone war.
Among them is the sword which I must use.
It, by three golden lilies, may be known,
Upon the blade impress'd. Let it be brought,
For thou, my liege, shalt conquer through this sword.
CHAS. Perform what she commands.
JOHAN. And a white banner,
Edg'd with a purple border, let me bear.
Upon this banner let the Queen of Heaven
Be pictur'd, with the beauteous Jesus child,
Floating in glory o'er this earthly ball,
For so the Holy Mother show'd it me.
CHAS. So be it as thou sayest.
JOHAN. (*to the* ARCHBISHOP) Reverend bishop,
Lay on my head thy consecrated hands!
Pronounce a blessing, father, on thy child!
[*She kneels down.*
ARCHB. Not blessings to receive, but to dispense
Art thou appointed. — Go, with power divine!
But we are sinners all and most unworthy.
[*She rises; a* PAGE *enters.*
PAGE. A herald from the English generals.
JOHAN. Let him appear, for he is sent by God!
[*The* KING *motions to the* PAGE, *who retires.*

SCENE XI.

The HERALD. *The same.*

CHAS. Thy tidings, herald? What thy message? Speak!
HER. Who is it, who for Charles of Valois,
The Count of Pointhieu, in this presence speaks?
DUNOIS. Unworthy herald! base, insulting knave!
Dost thou presume the monarch of the French
Thus in his own dominions to deny?
Thou art protected by thine office, else —
HER. One king alone is recognised by France,
And he resideth in the English camp.
CHAS. Peace, peace, good cousin! Speak thy message, herald.
HER. My noble general laments the blood
Which hath already flow'd, and still must flow.
Hence, in the scabbard holding back the sword,
Before by storm the town of Orleans falls,
He offers thee an amicable treaty.
CHAS. Proceed!
JOHAN. (*stepping forward*) Permit me, dauphin, in thy stead,
To parley with this herald.
CHAS. Do so, Maid!
Determine thou, for peace, or bloody war.
JOHAN. (*to the* HERALD) Who sendeth thee? Who speaketh through thy mouth?
HER. The Earl of Salisbury; the British chief.
JOHAN. Herald, 'tis false! The earl speaks not through thee,
Only the living speak, the dead are silent.
HER. The earl is well, and full of lusty strength;
He lives to bring down ruin on your heads.

JOHAN. When thou didst quit the British camp, he lived.
This morn, while gazing from Le Tournelle's tower,
A ball from Orleans struck him to the ground.
— Smil'st thou, that I discern what is remote?
Not to my words give credence; but believe
The witness of thine eyes! his funeral train
Thou shalt encounter as thou goest hence!
Now, herald, speak, and do thine errand here.

HER. If what is hidden thou canst thus reveal,
Thou know'st mine errand ere I tell it thee.

JOHAN. It boots me not to know it. But do thou
Give ear unto my words! This message bear
In answer to the lords who sent thee here.
— Monarch of England, and ye haughty dukes,
Bedford and Gloucester, regents of this realm!
To Heaven's high King ye are accountable
For all the blood that hath been shed! Restore
The keys of all the cities ta'en by force,
In opposition to God's holy law!
The Maiden cometh from the King of Heaven
And offers you or peace, or bloody war.
Choose ye! for this I say, that ye may know it:
To you this beauteous realm is not assign'd
By Mary's Son; — but God hath given it
To Charles, my lord and dauphin, who ere long
Will enter Paris with a monarch's pomp,
Attended by the great ones of his realm.
— Now, herald, go, and speedily depart,
For ere thou canst attain the British camp
And do thine errand, is the Maiden there,
To plant the sign of victory at Orleans.

[*She retires. In the midst of a general movement, the curtain falls.*

ACT II.

Landscape, bounded by rocks.

SCENE I.

TALBOT *and* LIONEL, *English Generals*, PHILIP, DUKE OF BURGUNDY, FASTOLFE, *and* CHATILLON, *with soldiers and banners.*

TALBOT. Here let us make a halt, beneath these rocks,
And pitch our camp, in case our scatter'd troops,
Dispers'd in panic fear, again should rally.
Choose trusty sentinels, and guard the heights!
'Tis true the darkness shields us from pursuit.
And sure I am, unless the foe have wings,
We need not fear surprisal. — Still 'tis well
To practise caution, for we have to do
With a bold foe, and have sustain'd defeat.

[FASTOLFE *goes out with the soldiers.*

LIONEL. Defeat! My general, do not speak that word.
It stings me to the quick to think the French
To-day have seen the backs of Englishmen.
— O, Orleans! Orleans! Grave of England's glory!
Our honour lies upon thy fatal plains,
Defeat most ignominious and burlesque!
Who will in future years believe the tale!
The victors of Poictiers and Agincourt,
Cressy's bold heroes, routed by a woman?

BURG. That must console us. Not by mortal power,
But by the devil, have we been o'erthrown!

TALBOT. The devil of our own stupidity!

— How, Burgundy? Do princes quake and fear
Before the phantom which appals the vulgar?
Credulity is but a sorry cloak
For cowardice — Your people first took flight.

BURG. None stood their ground. The flight was general.

TALBOT. 'Tis false! Your wing fled first. You wildly broke
Into our camp, exclaiming: "Hell is loose,
The devil combats on the side of France!"
And thus you brought confusion 'mong our troops.

LIONEL. You can't deny it. Your wing yielded first.

BURG. Because the brunt of battle there commenced.

TALBOT. The Maiden knew the weakness of our camp;
She rightly judged where fear was to be found.

BURG. How? Shall the blame of our disaster rest
With Burgundy?

LIONEL. By Heav'n! were we alone,
We English, never had we Orleans lost!

BURG. No, truly! — for ye ne'er had Orleans seen!
Who opened you a way into this realm,
And reached you forth a kind and friendly hand,
When you descended on this hostile coast?
Who was it crowned your Henry at Paris,
And unto him subdued the people's hearts?
Had this Burgundian arm not guided you
Into this realm, by Heaven! ye ne'er had seen
The smoke ascending from a single hearth!

LIONEL. Were conquests with big words effected, duke,
You, doubtless, would have conquered France alone.

BURG. The loss of Orleans angers you, and now
You vent your gall on me, your friend and ally.
What lost us Orleans but your avarice?
The city was prepared to yield to me,
Your envy was the sole impediment.

TALBOT. We did not undertake the siege for you.
BURG. How would it stand with you, if I withdrew
With all my host?
LIONEL. We should not be worse off,
Than when, at Agincourt, we prov'd a match
For you, and all the banded power of France.
BURG. Yet much ye stood in need of our alliance,
The regent purchased it at heavy cost.
TALBOT. Most dearly, with the forfeit of our honour,
At Orleans, have we paid for it to-day.
BURG. Urge me no further, lords. Ye may repent it!
Did I forsake the banners of my king,
Draw down upon my head the traitor's name,
To be insulted thus by foreigners?
Why am I here to combat against France?
If I must needs endure ingratitude,
Let it come rather from my native king!
TALBOT. You're in communication with the dauphin,
We know it well, but we shall soon find means
To guard ourselves 'gainst treason.
BURG. Death and hell!
Am I encounter'd thus? — Chatillon, hark!
Let all my troops prepare to quit the camp.
We will retire into our own domain.
[CHATILLON *goes out.*
LIONEL. God speed you there! Never did Britain's fame
More brightly shine, than when she stood alone,
Confiding solely in her own good sword.
Let each one fight his battle for himself,
For 'tis eternal truth, that English blood
Cannot, with honour, blend with blood of France.

Scene II.

The same. Queen Isabel, *attended by a* Page.

Isabel. What must I hear? This fatal strife forbear!
What brain-bewildering planet o'er your minds
Sheds dire perplexity? When unity
Alone can save you, will you part in hate,
And, warring 'mong yourselves, prepare your doom?
— I do entreat you, noble duke, recall
Your hasty order. You, renowned Talbot,
Seek to appease an irritated friend!
Come, Lionel, aid me to reconcile
These haughty spirits, and establish peace.
Lionel. Not I, madame. It is all one to me.
'Tis my belief, when things are misallied,
The sooner they part company the better.
Isabel. How? Do the arts of hell, which on the field
Wrought such disastrous ruin, even here
Bewilder and befool us? Who began
This fatal quarrel? Speak! — Lord general!
Your own advantage did you so forget,
As to offend your worthy friend and ally?
What could you do without his powerful arm?
'Twas he who placed your monarch on the throne.
He holds him there, and he can hurl him thence;
His army strengthens you — still more his name.
Were England all her citizens to pour
Upon our coasts, she never o'er this realm
Would gain dominion, did she stand alone;
No! France can only be subdued by France!
Talbot. A faithful friend we honour as we ought;
Discretion warns us to beware the false.

BURG. The liar's brazen front beseemeth him
Who would absolve himself from gratitude.
ISABEL. How, noble duke? Could you so far renounce
Your princely honour, and your sense of shame,
As clasp the hand of him who slew your sire?
Are you so mad to entertain the thought
Of cordial reconcilement with the dauphin,
Whom you, yourself, have hurl'd to ruin's brink?
His overthrow you have well-nigh achieved,
And madly now would you renounce your work?
Here stand your allies. Your salvation lies
In an indissoluble bond with England.
BURG. Far is my thought from treaty with the dauphin;
But the contempt and insolent demeanour
Of haughty England I will not endure.
ISABEL. Come, noble duke! Excuse a hasty word.
Heavy the grief which bows the general down,
And well you know, misfortune makes unjust.
Come! come! embrace; let me this fatal breach
Repair at once, ere it becomes eternal.
TALBOT. What think you, Burgundy? A noble heart,
By reason vanquish'd, doth confess its fault.
A wise and prudent word the queen hath spoken.
Come, let my hand, with friendly pressure, heal
The wound inflicted by my angry tongue.
BURG. Discreet the counsel offered by the queen!
My just wrath yieldeth to necessity.
ISABEL. 'Tis well! Now with a brotherly embrace
Confirm and seal the new-established bond;
And may the winds disperse what hath been spoken.
[BURGUNDY *and* TALBOT *embrace.*
LIONEL. (*contemplating the group aside*) Hail to an union by the Furies planned!
ISABEL. Fate hath proved adverse, we have lost a battle,

But do not, therefore, let your courage sink.
The dauphin, in despair of heavenly aid,
Doth make alliance with the powers of hell;
Vainly his soul he forfeits to the devil,
For hell itself cannot deliver him.
A conquering maiden leads the hostile force;
Yours, I, myself, will lead; to you I'll stand
In place of maiden or of prophetess.

LIONEL. Madame, return to Paris! We desire
To war with trusty weapons, not with women.

TALBOT. Go! go! Since your arrival in the camp,
Fortune hath fled our banners, and our course
Hath still been retrograde.

BURG. Depart at once!
Your presence here doth scandalise the host.

ISABEL. (*looks from one to the other with astonishment*)
This, Burgundy, from you? Do you take part
Against me with these thankless English lords?

BURG. Go! go! The thought of combating for you
Unnerves the courage of the bravest men.

ISABEL. I scarce among you have establish'd peace,
And you already form a league against me!

TALBOT. Go, in God's name. When you have left the camp,
No devil will again appal our troops.

ISABEL. Say am I not your true confederate?
Are we not banded in a common cause?

TALBOT. Thank God! your cause of quarrel is not ours.
We combat in an honourable strife.

BURG. A father's bloody murder I avenge;
Stern filial duty consecrates my arms.

TALBOT. Confess at once! Your conduct toward the dauphin
Is an offence alike to God and man.

ISABEL. Curses blast him and his posterity!
The shameless son who sins against his mother!
BURG. Ay! to avenge a husband and a father!
ISABEL. To judge his mother's conduct he presumed!
LIONEL. That was, indeed, irreverent in a son!
ISABEL. And me, forsooth, he banish'd from the realm!
TALBOT. Urged to the measure by the public voice.
ISABEL. A curse light on him if I e'er forgive him!
Rather than see him on his father's throne —
TALBOT. His mother's honour you would sacrifice!
ISABEL. Your feeble natures cannot comprehend
The vengeance of an outrag'd mother's heart.
Who pleasures me, I love! who wrongs, I hate.
If he who wrongs me chance to be my son,
All the more worthy is he of my hate.
The life I gave, I will again take back
From him who doth, with ruthless violence,
The bosom rend which bore and nourish'd him.
Ye, who do thus make war upon the dauphin,
What rightful cause have ye to plunder him?
What crime hath he committed against you?
What insult are you call'd on to avenge?
Ambition, paltry envy, goad you on;
I have a right to hate him — he's my son.
TALBOT. He feels his mother in her dire revenge!
ISABEL. Mean hypocrites! I hate you and despise.
Together with the world, you cheat yourselves!
With robber-hands you English seek to clutch
This realm of France, where you have no just right,
Nor equitable claim, to so much earth
As could be cover'd by your charger's hoof.
— This duke, too, whom the people style The Good,
Doth to a foreign lord, his country's foe,
For gold betray the birthland of his sires.
And yet is justice ever on your tongue.

— Hypocrisy I scorn. Such as I am,
So let the world behold me!
BURG. It is true!
Your reputation you have well maintain'd.
ISABEL. I've passions and warm blood, and as a queen
Came to this realm to live, and not to seem.
Should I have lingered out a joyless life
Because the curse of adverse destiny
To a mad consort join'd my blooming youth?
More than my life I prize my liberty,
And who assails me here — But why should I
Stoop to dispute with you about my rights?
Your sluggish blood flows slowly in your veins!
Strangers to pleasure, ye know only rage!
This duke, too, — who, throughout his whole career,
Hath waver'd to and fro, 'twixt good and ill, —
Can neither hate nor love with his whole heart.
— I go to Melun. Let this gentleman,
[*Pointing to* LIONEL.
Who doth my fancy please, attend me there,
To cheer my solitude, and you may work
Your own good pleasure! I'll inquire no more
Concerning the Burgundians or the English.
[*She beckons to her* PAGE, *and is about to retire.*
LIONEL. Rely upon us, we will send to Melun
The fairest youths whom we in battle take.
[*Coming back.*
ISABEL. Skilful your arm to wield thy sword of death,
The French alone can round the polish'd phrase.
[*She goes out.*

Scene III.

Talbot, Burgundy, Lionel.

Talbot. Heavens! What a woman!
Lionel. Now, brave generals,
Your counsel! Shall we prosecute our flight,
Or turn, and with a bold and sudden stroke
Wipe out the foul dishonour of to-day?
Burg. We are too weak, our soldiers are dispersed,
The recent terror still unnerves the host.
Talbot. Blind terror, sudden impulse of a moment,
Alone occasioned our disastrous rout.
This phantom of the terror-stricken brain,
More closely view'd, will vanish into air.
My counsel, therefore, is, at break of day,
To lead the army back, across the stream,
To meet the enemy.
Burg. Consider well —
Lionel. Your pardon! Here is nothing to consider.
What we have lost we must at once retrieve,
Or look to be eternally disgraced.
Talbot. It is resolved. To-morrow morn we fight,
This dread-inspiring phantom to destroy,
Which thus doth blind and terrify the host.
Let us in fight encounter this she-devil.
If she oppose her person to our sword,
Trust me, she never will molest us more;
If she avoid our stroke — and be assured
She will not stand the hazard of a battle —
Then is the dire enchantment at an end!
Lionel. So be it! And to me, my general, leave
This easy, bloodless combat, for I hope
Alive to take this ghost, and in my arms,
Before the Bastard's eyes — her paramour —
To bear her over to the English camp,

To be the sport and mockery of the host.
BURG. Make not too sure.
TALBOT. If she encounter me,
I shall not give her such a soft embrace.
Come now, exhausted nature to restore
Through gentle sleep. At daybreak we set forth.
[*They go out.*

SCENE IV.

JOHANNA, *with her banner, in a helmet and breastplate, otherwise attired as a woman.* DUNOIS, LA HIRE, *Knights, and Soldiers, appear above upon the rocky path, pass silently over, and appear immediately after on the scene.*

JOHAN. (*to the Knights, who surround her, while the procession continues above*)
The wall is scaled, and we are in the camp!
Now fling aside the mantle of still night,
Which hitherto hath veil'd your silent march,
And your dread presence to the foe proclaim
By your loud battle-cry — God and the Maiden!
ALL. (*exclaim aloud, amidst the loud clang of arms*)
God and the Maiden! [*Drums and trumpets.*
SENTINELS. (*behind the scene*) The foe! The foe! The foe!
JOHAN. Ho! torches here! Hurl fire into the tents!
Let the devouring flames augment the horror,
While threatening death doth compass them around!
[*Soldiers hasten on, she is about to follow.*
DUNOIS. (*holding her back*) Thy part thou hast accomplish'd now, Johanna!
Into the camp thou has conducted us.
The foe thou hast deliver'd in our hands.

Now from the rush of war remain apart!
The bloody consummation leave to us.
HIRE. Point out the path of conquest to the host;
Before us, in pure hand, the banner bear,
But wield the fatal weapon not thyself;
Tempt not the treacherous God of battle, for
He rageth blindly, and he spareth not.
JOHAN. Who dares impede my progress? Who presume
The Spirit to control, which guideth me?
Still must the arrow wing its destin'd flight!
Where danger is, there must Johanna be;
Nor now, nor here, am I foredoom'd to fall;
Our monarch's royal brow I first must see
Invested with the round of sovereignty.
No hostile power can rob me of my life,
Till I've accomplish'd the commands of God.
[*She goes out.*
HIRE. Come, let us follow after her, Dunois,
And let our valiant bosoms be her shield! [*Exit.*

SCENE V.

ENGLISH SOLDIERS *hurry over the stage. Afterward* TALBOT.

FIRST SOL. The Maiden in the camp!
SEC. SOL. Impossible!
It cannot be! How came she in the camp?
THIRD SOL. Why, through the air! The devil aided her!
FOURTH AND FIFTH SOL. Fly! Fly! We are dead men!
TALBOT. (*enters*) They heed me not! — They stay not at my call!
The sacred bands of discipline are loosed!

As hell had poured her damned legions forth,
A wild distracting impulse whirls along,
In one mad throng, the cowardly and brave.
I cannot rally e'en the smallest troop
To form a bulwark 'gainst the hostile flood,
Whose raging billows press into our camp!
— Do I alone retain my sober senses,
While all around in wild delirium rave?
To fly before these weak degenerate Frenchmen
Whom we in twenty battles have o'erthrown! —
Who is she then — the irresistible —
The dread-inspiring goddess, who doth turn
At once the tide of battle, and transform
To lions bold, a herd of timid deer?
A juggling minx, who plays the well-learn'd part
Of heroine, thus to appal the brave?
A woman snatch from me all martial fame?

SOL. (*rushes in*) The Maiden comes! Fly, general! fly! fly!

TALBOT. (*strikes him down*) Fly thou, thyself, to hell! This sword shall pierce
Who talks to me of fear, or coward flight!

[*He goes out.*

SCENE VI.

The prospect opens. The English camp is seen in flames. Drums, flight and pursuit. After awhile MONTGOMERY *enters.*

MONT. (*alone*) Where shall I flee? Foes all around and death! Lo! here
The furious general, who, with threatening sword, prevents
Escape, and drives us back into the jaws of death.
The dreadful Maiden there — the terrible — who, like

Devouring flame, destruction spreads; while all around
Appears no bush wherein to hide — no sheltering cave!
Oh, would that o'er the sea I never had come here!
Me miserable! Empty dreams deluded me —
Cheap glory to achieve on Gallia's martial fields;
And I am guided by malignant destiny
Into this murd'rous fight. — Oh, were I far, far hence.
Still in my peaceful home, on Severn's flowery banks,
Where, in my father's house, in sorrow and in tears,
I left my mother and my fair young bride.

[JOHANNA *appears in the distance.*

Woe's me! What do I see! The dreadful form appears!
Arrayed in lurid light, she from the raging fire
Issues, as from the jaws of hell, a midnight ghost.
Where shall I go? — where flee? Already, from afar,
She seizes on me with her eye of fire, and flings
Her fatal and unerring coil, whose magic folds
With ever-tightening pressure bind my feet, and make
Escape impossible! Howe'er my heart rebels,
I am compell'd to follow with my gaze that form
Of dread!

[JOHANNA *advances toward him some steps; and again remains standing.*

She comes! I will not passively await
Her furious onset! Imploringly I'll clasp
Her knees! I'll sue to her for life. She is a woman,
I may perchance to pity move her by my tears!

[*While he is on the point of approaching her, she draws near.*

Scene VII.

Johanna, Montgomery.

Johan. Prepare to die! A British mother bore thee!

Mont. (*falls at her feet*) Fall back, terrific one! Forbear to strike
An unprotected foe! My sword and shield
I've flung aside, and supplicating fall
Defenceless at thy feet. A ransom take!
Extinguish not the precious light of life!
With fair possessions crown'd, my father dwells
In Wales' fair land, where among verdant meads
The winding Severn rolls his silver tide,
And fifty villages confess his sway.
With heavy gold he will redeem his son,
When he shall hear I'm in the camp of France.

Johan. Deluded mortal! to destruction doomed!
Thou'rt fallen in the Maiden's hand, from which
Redemption or deliverance there is none.
Had adverse fortune given thee a prey
To the fierce tiger or the crocodile —
Hadst robbed the lion-mother of her brood —
Compassion thou mightst hope to find and pity;
But to encounter me is certain death.
For my dread compact with the spirit realm —
The stern, inviolable — bindeth me
To slay each living thing whom battle's God,
Full charged with doom, delivers to my sword.

Mont. Thy speech is fearful, but thy look is mild;
Not dreadful art thou to contemplate near;
My heart is drawn toward thy lovely form.
O! by the mildness of thy gentle sex,
Attend my prayer. Compassionate my youth.

JOHAN. Name me not woman! Speak not of my sex!
Like to the bodiless spirits, who know nought
Of earth's humanities, I own no sex;
Beneath this vest of steel there beats no heart.
MONT. O! by love's sacred all-pervading power,
To whom all hearts yield homage, I conjure thee.
At home I left behind a gentle bride,
Beauteous as thou, and rich in blooming grace;
Weeping she waiteth her betrothed's return.
O! if thyself dost ever hope to love,
If in thy love thou hopest to be happy,
Then ruthless sever not two gentle hearts,
Together linked in love's most holy bond!
JOHAN. Thou dost appeal to earthly, unknown gods,
To whom I yield no homage. Of love's bond,
By which thou dost conjure me, I know nought,
Nor ever will I know this empty service.
Defend thy life, for death doth summon thee.
MONT. Take pity on my sorrowing parents, whom
I left at home. Doubtless thou, too, hast left
Parents, who feel disquietude for thee.
JOHAN. Unhappy man! thou dost remember me
How many mothers, of this land, your arms
Have rendered childless and disconsolate;
How many gentle children fatherless;
How many fair young brides dejected widows!
Let England's mothers now be taught despair,
And learn to weep the bitter tear, oft shed
By the bereav'd and sorrowing wives of France.
MONT. 'Tis hard, in foreign lands to die unwept.
JOHAN. Who call'd you over to this foreign land,
To waste the blooming culture of our fields,
To chase the peasant from his household hearth,
And in our cities' peaceful sanctuary
To hurl the direful thunderbolt of war?

In the delusion of your hearts ye thought
To plunge in servitude the free-born French,
And to attach their fair and goodly realm,
Like a small boat, to your proud English bark!
Ye fools! The royal arms of France are hung
Fast by the throne of God; and ye as soon
From the bright wain of heaven might snatch a star,
As rend a single village from this realm,
Which shall remain inviolate for ever!
— The day of vengeance is at length arrived;
Not living shall ye measure back the sea,
The sacred sea — the boundary set by God
Betwixt our hostile nations — and the which
Ye ventur'd impiously to overpass.

MONT. (*lets go her hands*) O, I must die! I feel the grasp of death!

JOHAN. Die, friend! Why tremble at the approach of death,
Of mortals the irrevocable doom?
Look upon me! I'm born a shepherd maid;
This hand, accustom'd to the peaceful crook,
Is all unused to wield the sword of death,
Yet, snatch'd away from childhood's peaceful haunts,
From the fond love of father and of sisters,
Urged by no idle dream of earthly glory,
But Heaven-appointed to achieve your ruin,
Like a destroying angel I must roam,
Spreading dire havoc round me, and at length
Myself must fall a sacrifice to death!
Never again shall I behold my home!
Still many of your people I must slay,
Still many widows make, but I at length
Myself shall perish, and fulfil my doom.
— Now thine fulfil. Arise! resume thy sword,
And let us fight for the sweet prize of life.

MONT. (*stands up*) Now, if thou art a mortal like myself,

Can-weapons wound thee, it may be assign'd
To this good arm to end my country's woe,
Thee sending, sorceress, to the depths of hell.
In God's most gracious hands I leave my fate.
Accursed one! to thine assistance call
The fiends of hell! Now combat for thy life!

[*He seizes his sword and shield, and rushes upon her; martial music is heard in the distance. — After a short conflict* MONTGOMERY *falls.*

SCENE VIII.

JOHAN. (*alone*) To death thy foot did bear thee — fare thee well!

[*She steps away from him and remains absorbed in thought.*

Virgin, thou workest mightily in me!
My feeble arm thou dost endue with strength,
And steep'st my woman's heart in cruelty.
In pity melts the soul and the hand trembles,
As it did violate some sacred fane,
To mar the goodly person of the foe.
Once I did shudder at the polish'd sheath,
But when 'tis needed, I'm possess'd with strength,
And as it were itself a thing of life,
The fatal weapon, in my trembling grasp,
Self-swayed, inflicteth the unerring stroke.

SCENE IX.

A KNIGHT *with closed visor*, JOHANNA.

KNIGHT. Accursed one! thy hour of death is come!
Long have I sought thee on the battle-field.
Fatal delusion! get thee back to hell,

Whence thou didst issue forth.
JOHAN. Say, who art thou,
Whom his bad genius sendeth in my way?
Princely thy port, no Briton dost thou seem,
For the Burgundian colours stripe thy shield,
Before the which my sword inclines its point.
KNIGHT. Vile castaway! Thou all unworthy art
To fall beneath a prince's noble hand.
The hangman's axe should thy accursed head
Cleave from thy trunk, unfit for such vile use
The royal Duke of Burgundy's brave sword.
JOHAN. Art thou indeed that noble duke himself?
KNIGHT. (*raises his visor*) I'm he, vile creature, tremble and despair!
The arts of hell shall not protect thee more,
Thou hast till now weak dastards overcome;
Now thou dost meet a man.

SCENE X.

DUNOIS *and* LA HIRE. *The same.*

DUNOIS. Hold, Burgundy!
Turn! combat now with men, and not with maids.
HIRE. We will defend the holy prophetess;
First must thy weapon penetrate this breast. —
BURG. I fear not this seducing Circe; no,
Nor you, whom she hath changed so shamefully!
Oh blush, Dunois! and do thou blush, La Hire!
To stoop thy valour to these hellish arts —
To be shield-bearer to a sorceress!
Come one — come all! He only who despairs
Of Heaven's protection seeks the aid of hell.
[*They prepare for combat,* JOHANNA *steps between.*
JOHAN. Forbear!

BURG. Dost tremble for thy lover? Thus
Before thine eyes he shall —
[*He makes a thrust at* DUNOIS.
JOHAN. Dunois, forbear!
Part them, La Hire! no blood of France must flow;
Not hostile weapons must this strife decide.
Above the stars 'tis otherwise decreed.
Fall back! — I say — Attend and venerate
The Spirit, which hath seized, which speaks through me!
DUNOIS. Why, Maiden, now hold back my upraised arm?
Why check the just decision of the sword?
My weapon pants to deal the fatal blow
Which shall avenge and heal the woes of France.
[*She places herself in the midst, and separates the parties.*
JOHAN. Fall back, Dunois! Stand where thou art, La Hire! [*When all is quiet.*
Somewhat I have to say to Burgundy.
What would'st thou, Burgundy? Who is the foe
Whom eagerly thy murderous glances seek?
This prince is, like thyself, a son of France, —
This hero is thy countryman, thy friend;
I am a daughter of thy fatherland.
We all, whom thou art eager to destroy,
Are of thy friends; — our longing arms prepare
To clasp, our bending knees to honour thee. —
Our sword 'gainst thee is pointless, and that face
E'en in a hostile helm is dear to us,
For there we trace the features of our king.
BURG. What, syren! wilt thou with seducing words
Allure thy victim? Cunning sorceress,
Me thou deludest not. Mine ears are closed
Against thy treacherous words; and vainly dart
Thy fiery glances 'gainst this mail of proof.

To arms, Dunois!
With weapons let us fight, and not with words.
DUNOIS. First words, then weapons, Burgundy! Do words
With dread inspire thee? 'Tis a coward's fear,
And the betrayer of an evil cause.
JOHAN. 'Tis not imperious necessity
Which throws us at thy feet! We do not come
As suppliants before thee. — Look around!
The English tents are level with the ground,
And all the field is cover'd with your slain.
Hark! the war-trumpets of the French resound:
God hath decided — ours the victory!
Our new-cull'd laurel garland with our friend
We fain would share. — Come, noble fugitive!
Oh, come where justice and where victory dwell!
Even I, the messenger of Heaven, extend
A sister's hand to thee. I fain would save
And draw thee over to our righteous cause!
Heaven hath declared for France! Angelic powers,
Unseen by thee, do battle for our king;
With lilies are the holy ones adorn'd.
Pure as this radiant banner is our cause;
Its blessed symbol is the Queen of Heaven.
BURG. Falsehood's fallacious words are full of guile,
But hers are pure and simple as a child's.
If evil spirits borrow this disguise,
They copy innocence triumphantly.
I'll hear no more. To arms, Dunois! to arms!
Mine ear, I feel, is weaker than mine arm.
JOHAN. You call me an enchantress, and accuse
Of hellish arts. — Is it the work of hell
To heal dissension and to foster peace?
Comes holy concord from the depths below?
Say, what is holy, innocent, and good,
If not to combat for our fatherland?
Since when hath nature been so self-opposed,

That Heaven forsakes the just and righteous cause,
While Hell protects it? If my words are true,
Whence could I draw them but from heaven above?
Who ever sought me in my shepherd-walks,
To teach the humble maid affairs of state?
I ne'er have stood with princes, to these lips
Unknown the arts of eloquence. Yet now,
When I have need of it to touch thy heart,
Insight and varied knowledge I possess;
The fate of empires and the doom of kings
Lie clearly spread before my childish mind,
And words of thunder issue from my mouth.

BURG. (*greatly moved, looks at her with emotion and astonishment*)
How is it with me? Doth some heavenly power
Thus strangely stir my spirit's inmost depths?
— This pure, this gentle creature cannot lie!
No, if enchantment blinds me, 'tis from Heaven.
My spirit tells me she is sent from God.

JOHAN. Oh, he is mov'd! I have not pray'd in vain,
Wrath's thundercloud dissolves in gentle tears,
And leaves his brow, while mercy's golden beams
Break from his eyes and gently promise peace.
— Away with arms, now clasp him to your hearts,
He weeps — he's conquer'd, he is ours once more!

[*Her sword and banner fall; she hastens to him with outstretched arms, and embraces him in great agitation.* LA HIRE *and* DUNOIS *throw down their swords, and hasten also to embrace him.*

ACT III.

Residence of the KING *at Chalons on the Marne.*

SCENE I.

DUNOIS, LA HIRE.

DUNOIS. We have been true heart-friends, brothers in arms,
Still have we battled in a common cause,
And held together amid toil and death.
Let not the love of woman rend the bond
Which hath resisted every stroke of fate.
HIRE. Hear me, my prince!
DUNOIS. You love the wondrous maid,
And well I know the purpose of your heart.
You think without delay to seek the king,
And to entreat him to bestow on you
Her hand in marriage. — Of your bravery
The well-earn'd guerdon, he cannot refuse
But know, — ere I behold her in the arms
Of any other —
HIRE. Listen to me, prince!
DUNOIS. 'Tis not the fleeting passion of the eye
Attracts me to her. My unconquer'd sense
Had set at nought the fiery shafts of love
Till I beheld this wondrous maiden, sent
By a divine appointment to become
The saviour of this kingdom, and my wife;
And on the instant in my heart I vow'd
A sacred oath, to bear her home, my bride.
For she alone who is endowed with strength
Can be the strong man's friend. This glowing heart
Longs to repose upon a kindred breast,
Which can sustain and comprehend its strength.

HIRE. How dare I venture, prince, my poor deserts
To measure with your name's heroic fame!
When Count Dunois appeareth in the lists,
Each humbler suitor must forsake the field;
Still it doth ill become a shepherd maid
To stand as consort by your princely side.
The royal current in your veins would scorn
To mix with blood of baser quality.

DUNOIS. She, like myself, is holy Nature's child,
A child divine — hence we by birth are equal.
She bring dishonour on a prince's hand,
Who is the holy Angel's bride, whose head
Is by a heavenly glory circled round,
Whose radiance far outshineth earthly crowns,
Who seeth lying far beneath her feet
All that is greatest, highest, of this earth;
For thrones on thrones, ascending to the stars,
Would fail to reach the height where she abides
In angel majesty!

HIRE. Our monarch must decide.

DUNOIS. Not so! she must
Decide! Free hath she made this realm of France,
And she herself must freely give her heart.

HIRE. Here comes the king!

SCENE II.

CHARLES, AGNES SOREL, DU CHATEL, *and* CHATILLON.

The same.

CHAS. (*to* CHATILLON) He comes! My title he will recognise,
And do me homage as his sovereign liege?

CHATIL. Here, in his royal town of Chalons, Sire,

The duke, my master, will fall down before thee.
— He did command me, as my lord and king,
To give thee greeting. He'll be here anon.
SOREL. He comes! Hail beauteous and auspicious day,
Which bringeth joy, and peace, and reconcilement!
CHATIL. The duke, attended by two hundred knights,
Will hither come; he at thy feet will kneel;
But he expecteth not that thou to him
Shouldst yield the cordial greeting of a kinsman.
CHAS. I long to clasp him to my throbbing heart.
CHATIL. The duke entreats that at this interview
No word he spoken of the ancient strife!
CHAS. In Lethe be the past for ever sunk!
The smiling future now invites our gaze.
CHATIL. All who have combated for Burgundy
Shall be included in the amnesty.
CHAS. So shall my realm be doubled in extent;
CHATIL. Queen Isabel, if she consent thereto,
Shall also be included in the peace.
CHAS. She maketh war on me, not I on her.
With her alone it rests to end our quarrel.
CHATIL. Twelve knights shall answer for thy royal word.
CHAS. My word is sacred.
CHATIL. The archbishop shall
Between you break the consecrated Host,
As pledge and seal of cordial reconcilement.
CHAS. Let my eternal weal be forfeited,
If my hand's friendly grasp belie my heart.
What other surety doth the duke require?
CHATIL. (*glancing at* DU CHATEL) I see one standing here, whose presence, Sire,
Perchance might poison the first interview.
[DU CHATEL *retires in silence.*
CHAS. Depart, Du Chatel, and remain conceal'd

Until the duke can bear thee in his sight.

[*He follows him with his eye, then hastens after and embraces him.*

True-hearted friend! Thou wouldst far more than this
Have done for my repose! [*Exit* DU CHATEL.

CHATIL. This instrument doth name the other points.

CHAS. (*to the* ARCHBISHOP) Let it be settled. We agree to all.

We count no price too high to gain a friend.
Go now, Dunois, and with a hundred knights
Give courteous conduct to the noble duke.
Let the troops, garlanded with verdant boughs,
Receive their comrades with a joyous welcome.
Be the whole town arrayed in festal pomp,
And let the bells, with joyous peal, proclaim
That France and Burgundy are reconcil'd.

[*A* PAGE *enters. Trumpets sound.*

Hark! What importeth that loud trumpet's call?

PAGE. The Duke of Burgundy hath stayed his march. [*Exit.*

DUNOIS. Up! forth to meet him!

[*Exit with* LA HIRE *and* CHATILLON.

CHAS. (*to* SOREL) My Agnes! thou dost weep! Even my strength
Doth almost fail me at this interview.
How many victims have been doom'd to fall
Ere we could meet in peace and reconcilement!
But every storm at length suspends its rage,
Day follows on the murkiest night; and still,
When comes the hour, the latest fruits mature!

ARCHB. (*at the window*) The thronging crowds impede the duke's advance;
He scarce can free himself. They lift him now
From off his horse; they kiss his spurs, his mantle.

CHAS. They're a good people, in whom love flames forth

As suddenly as wrath. — In how brief space
They do forget that 'tis this very duke
Who slew, in fight, their fathers and their sons;
The moment swallows up the whole of life!
— Be tranquil, Sorel! E'en thy passionate joy
Perchance might to his conscience prove a thorn.
Nothing should either shame or grieve him here.

Scene III.

The Duke of Burgundy, Dunois, La Hire, Chatillon, *and two other Knights of the* Duke's *train. The* Duke *remains standing at the door; the* King *inclines toward him;* Burgundy *immediately advances, and in the moment when he is about to throw himself upon his knees, the* King *receives him in his arms.*

Chas. You have surprised us — it was our intent
To fetch you hither — but your steeds are fleet.
Burg. They bore me to my duty.
[*He embraces* Sorel, *and kisses her brow.*
With your leave!
At Arras, niece, it is our privilege,
And no fair damsel may exemption claim.
Chas. Rumour doth speak your court the seat of love,
The mart where all that's beautiful must tarry.
Burg. We are a traffic-loving people, Sire;
Whate'er of costly earth's wide realms produce,
For show and for enjoyment, is displayed
Upon our mart at Bruges; but above all
There woman's beauty is preëminent.
Sorel. More precious far is woman's truth; but it
Appeareth not upon the public mart.
Chas. Kinsman, 'tis rumour'd to your prejudice,
That woman's fairest virtue you despise.

BURG. The heresy inflicteth on itself
The heaviest penalty. 'Tis well for you,
From your own heart, my king, you learn'd betimes
What a wild life hath late reveal'd to me.
[*He perceives the* ARCHBISHOP, *and extends his hand.*
Most reverend minister of God! your blessing!
You still are to be found on duty's path,
Where those must walk who would encounter you.
ARCHB. Now let my Master call me when he will;
My heart is full, I can with joy depart,
Since that mine eyes have seen this day!
BURG. (*to* SOREL) 'Tis said
That of your precious stones you robb'd yourself,
Therefrom to forge 'gainst me the tools of war?
Bear you a soul so martial? Were you then
So resolute to work my overthrow?
Well, now our strife is over; what was lost
Will in due season all be found again.
Even your jewels have return'd to you.
Against me to make war they were design'd;
Receive them from me as a pledge of peace.
[*He receives a casket from one of the Attendants, and presents it to her open.* SOREL, *embarrassed, looks at the* KING.
CHAS. Receive this present; 'tis a twofold pledge
Of reconcilement, and of fairest love.
BURG. (*placing a diamond rose in her hair*) Why, is it not the diadem of France?
With full as glad a spirit I would place
The golden circle on this lovely brow.
[*Taking her hand significantly.*
And count on me if, at some future time,
You should require a friend!
[AGNES SOREL *bursts into tears, and steps aside. The* KING *struggles with his feelings. The bystanders contemplate the two* PRINCES *with emotion.*

BURG. (*after gazing around the circle, throws himself into the* KING'S *arms*) O, my king!

[*At the same moment the three Burgundian Knights hasten to* DUNOIS, LA HIRE, *and the* ARCHBISHOP. *They embrace each other. The two* PRINCES *remain for a time speechless in each other's arms.*

I could renounce you! I could bear you hate!

CHAS. Hush! hush! No further!

BURG. I this English king
Could crown! Swear fealty to this foreigner!
And you, my sovereign, into ruin plunge!

CHAS. Forget it! Everything's forgiven now,
This single moment doth obliterate all!
'Twas a malignant star! A destiny!

BURG. (*grasps his hand*) Believe me, Sire, I'll make amends for all.
Your bitter sorrow I will compensate;
You shall receive your kingdom back entire,
A solitary village shall not fail!

CHAS. We are united. Now I fear no foe.

BURG. Trust me, it was not with a joyous spirit
That I bore arms against you. Did you know —
O wherefore sent you not this messenger?
[*Pointing to* SOREL.
I must have yielded to her gentle tears.
— Henceforth, since breast to breast we have embraced,
No power of hell again shall sever us!
My erring course ends here. His sovereign's heart
Is the true resting place for Burgundy.

ARCHB. (*steps between them*) Ye are united, princes! France doth rise
A renovated phœnix from its ashes.
Th' auspicious future greets us with a smile,
The country's bleeding wounds will heal again,
The villages, the desolated towns,
Rise in new splendour from their ruin'd heaps,

The fields array themselves in beauteous green —
But those who, victims of your quarrel, fell,
The dead, rise not again; the bitter tears,
Caused by your strife, remain for ever wept!
One generation hath been doom'd to woe,
On their descendants dawns a brighter day,
The gladness of the son wakes not the sire.
This the dire fruitage of your brother-strife!
Oh, princes! learn from hence to pause with dread,
Ere from its scabbard ye unsheathe the sword.
The man of power lets loose the God of war,
But not, obedient, as from fields of air
Returns the falcon to the sportsman's hand,
Doth the wild deity obey the call
Of mortal voice; nor will the Saviour's hand
A second time forth issue from the clouds.

BURG. O Sire! an angel walketh by your side.
— Where is she? Why do I behold her not?

CHAS. Where is Johanna? Wherefore faileth she
To grace the festival we owe to her?

ARCHB. She loves not, Sire, the idless of the court,
And when the heavenly mandate calls her not
Forth to the world's observance, she retires,
And doth avoid the notice of the crowd!
Doubtless, unless the welfare of the realm
Claims her regard, she communes with her God,
For still a blessing on her steps attends.

Scene IV.

The same.

JOHANNA *enters. She is clad in armour, and wears a garland in her hair.*

CHAS. Thou comest as a priestess deck'd, Johanna,
To consecrate the union form'd by thee!
BURG. How dreadful was the maiden in the fight!
How lovely circled by the beams of peace!
— My word, Johanna, have I now fulfill'd?
Art thou contented? Have I thine applause?
JOHAN. The greatest favour thou hast shown thyself.
Array'd in blessed light thou shinest now,
Who didst erewhile with bloody ominous ray,
Hang like a moon of terror in the heavens.
[*Looking around.*
Many brave knights I find assembled here,
And joy's glad radiance beams in every eye;
One mourner, one alone, I have encounter'd,
He must conceal himself, where all rejoice.
BURG. And who is conscious of such heavy guilt,
That of our favour he must needs despair?
JOHAN. May he approach? Oh, tell me that he may, —
Complete thy merit. Void the reconcilement
That frees not the whole heart. A drop of hate,
Remaining in the cup of joy, converts
The blessed draught to poison. —Let there be
No deed so stain'd with blood, that Burgundy
Cannot forgive it on this day of joy!
BURG. Ha! now I understand!
JOHAN. And thou'lt forgive?
Thou wilt indeed forgive? — Come in, Du Chatel!

[*She opens the door and leads in* DU CHATEL, *who remains standing at a distance.*

The duke is reconciled to all his foes,
And he is so to thee.

[DU CHATEL *approaches a few steps nearer, and tries to read the countenance of the* DUKE.

BURG. What makest thou
Of me, Johanna? Know'st thou what thou askest?

JOHAN. A gracious sovereign throws his portals wide,
Admitting every guest, excluding none;
As freely as the firmament the world,
So mercy must encircle friend and foe.
Impartially the sun pours forth his beams
Through all the regions of infinity;
The heaven's reviving dew falls everywhere,
And brings refreshment to each thirsty plant;
Whate'er is good, and cometh from on high,
Is universal, and without reserve;
But in the heart's recesses darkness dwells!

BURG. Oh, she can mould me to her wish; my heart
Is in her forming hand like melted wax.
— Du Chatel, I forgive thee — come, embrace me!
Shade of my sire! oh, not with wrathful eye
Behold me clasp the hand that shed thy blood.
Ye death-gods, reckon not to my account,
That my dread oath of vengeance I abjure.
With you, in yon dear realm of endless night,
There beats no human heart, and all remains
Eternal, steadfast, and immovable.
Here in the light of day 'tis otherwise.
Man, living, feeling man, is aye the sport
Of the o'ermast'ring present.

CHAS. (*to* JOHANNA) Lofty maid!
What owe I not to thee! How truly now
Hast thou fulfill'd thy word, — how rapidly

Reversed my destiny! Thou hast appeased
My friends, and in the dust o'erwhelm'd my foes;
From foreign yokes redeem'd my cities. — Thou
Hast all achieved. — Speak, how can I reward thee?
JOHAN. Sire, in prosperity be still humane,
As in misfortune thou hast ever been;
— And on the height of greatness ne'er forget
The value of a friend in times of need;
Thou hast approved it in adversity.
Refuse not to the lowest of thy people
The claims of justice and humanity,
For thy deliv'rer from the fold was call'd.
Beneath thy royal sceptre, thou shalt gather
The realm entire of France. Thou shalt become
The root and ancestor of mighty kings;
Succeeding monarchs, in their regal state,
Shall those outshine who fill'd the throne before.
Thy stock, in majesty, shall bloom so long
As it stands rooted in the people's love.
Pride only can achieve its overthrow,
And from the lowly station, whence to-day
God summon'd thy deliv'rer, ruin dire
Obscurely threats thy crime-polluted sons!
BURG. Exalted maid! Possessed with sacred fire!
If thou canst look into the gulf of time,
Speak also of my race! Shall coming years
With ampler honours crown my princely line?
JOHAN. High as the throne, thou, Burgundy, hast built
Thy seat of power, and thy aspiring heart
Would raise still higher, even to the clouds,
The lofty edifice. — But from on high
A hand omnipotent shall check its rise.
Fear thou not hence the downfall of thy house!
Its glory in a maiden shall survive;
Upon her breast shall sceptre-bearing kings,
The people's shepherds, bloom. Their ample sway

Shall o'er two realms extend, they shall ordain
Laws to control the known world, and the new,
Which God still veils behind the pathless waves.
CHAS. O, if the Spirit doth reveal it, speak;
Shall this alliance, which we now renew,
In distant ages still unite our sons?
JOHAN. (*after a pause*) Sovereigns and kings! dis-
union shun with dread!
Wake not contention from the murky cave
Where he doth lie asleep, for once aroused
He cannot soon be quell'd! He doth beget
An iron brood, a ruthless progeny;
Wildly the sweeping conflagration spreads.
— Be satisfied! Seek not to question further!
In the glad present let your hearts rejoice,
The future let me shroud!
SOREL. Exalted maid!
Thou canst explore my heart, thou readest there
If after worldly greatness it aspires;
To me too give a joyous oracle.
JOHAN. Of empires only I discern the doom;
In thine own bosom lies thy destiny!
DUNOIS. What, holy maid, will be thy destiny?
Doubtless, for thee, who art belov'd of Heaven,
The fairest earthly happiness shall bloom,
For thou art pure and holy.
JOHAN. Happiness
Abideth yonder, with our God, in heaven.
CHAS. Thy fortune be henceforth thy monarch's
care!
For I will glorify thy name in France,
And the remotest age shall call thee blest.
Thus I fulfil my word. — Kneel down!
[*He draws his sword and touches her with it.*
And rise
A noble! I, thy monarch, from the dust
Of thy mean birth exalt thee. — In the grave

Thy fathers I ennoble — thou shalt bear
Upon thy shield the fleur-de-lis, and be
Of equal lineage with the best in France.
Only the royal blood of Valois shall
Be nobler than thine own! The highest peer
Shall feel himself exalted by thy hand;
To wed thee nobly, maid, shall be my care.

DUNOIS. (*advancing*) My heart made choice of her when she was lowly,
The recent honour which encircles her
Neither exalts her merit, nor my love.
Here in my sovereign's presence, and before
This holy bishop, maid, I tender thee
My hand, and take thee as my princely wife,
If thou esteem me worthy to be thine.

CHAS. Resistless maiden! wonder thou dost add
To wonder! Yes, I now believe that nought's
Impossible to thee. Thou hast subdued
This haughty heart, which still hath scoff'd till now,
At love's omnipotence.

HIRE. (*advancing*) If I have read
Aright Johanna's soul, her modest heart's
Her fairest jewel. — She deserveth well
The homage of the great, but her desires
Soar not so high. — She striveth not to reach
A giddy eminence; an honest heart's
True love contents her, and the quiet lot
Which with this hand I humbly proffer her.

CHAS. Thou too, La Hire! two brave competitors, —
Peers in heroic virtue and renown!
— Wilt thou, who hast appeased mine enemies,
My realms united, part my dearest friends?
One only can possess her; I esteem
Each to be justly worthy such a prize.
Speak, maid! thy heart alone must here decide.

SOREL. The noble maiden is surprised, her cheek
Is crimson'd over with a modest blush.

Let her have leisure to consult her heart,
And in confiding friendship to unseal
Her long-closed bosom. Now the hour is come
When, with a sister's love, I also may
Approach the maid severe, and offer her
This silent faithful breast. — Permit us women
Alone to weigh this womanly affair;
Do you await the issue.

CHAS. (*about to retire*) Be it so!

JOHAN. No, Sire, not so! the crimson on my cheek
Is not the blush of bashful modesty.
Nought have I for this noble lady's ear
Which in this presence I may not proclaim.
The choice of these brave knights much honours me,
But I did not forsake my shepherd-walks,
To chase vain worldly splendour, nor array
My tender frame in panoply of war,
To twine the bridal garland in my hair.
Far other labour is assign'd to me,
Which a pure maiden can alone achieve.
I am the soldier of the Lord of Hosts,
And to no mortal man can I be wife.

ARCHB. To be a fond companion unto man
Is woman born — when nature she obeys,
Most wisely she fulfils high Heaven's decree!
When his behest who call'd thee to the field
Shall be accomplish'd, thou'lt resign thine arms,
And once again rejoin the softer sex,
Whose gentle nature thou dost now forego,
And which from war's stern duties is exempt.

JOHAN. Most reverend sir! as yet I cannot say
What work the Spirit will enjoin on me.
But when the time comes round, his guiding voice
Will not be mute, and it I will obey.
Now he commands me to complete my task,
My royal master's brow is still uncrown'd,

Still unanointed is his sacred head;
My sovereign cannot yet be call'd a king.
CHAS. We are advancing on the way to Rheims.
JOHAN. Let us not linger, for the enemy
Is planning how to intercept thy course:
I will conduct thee through the midst of them!
DUNOIS. And when thy holy mission is fulfill'd,
When we in triumph shall have enter'd Rheims,
Wilt thou not then permit me, sacred maid —
JOHAN. If Heaven ordain that, from the strife of death,
Crown'd with the wreath of conquest, I return,
My task will be accomplish'd — and the maid
Hath thenceforth in the palace nought to do.
CHAS. (*taking her hand*) It is the Spirit's voice impels thee now;
Love in thy bosom, Heaven-inspir'd, is mute;
'Twill not be ever so; believe me, maid!
Our weapons will repose, and victory
Will by the hand lead forward gentle peace.
Joy will return again to every breast,
And softer feelings wake in every heart, –
They will awaken also in thy breast,
And tears of gentle longing thou wilt weep,
Such as thine eye hath never shed before;
— This heart, which Heaven now occupies alone,
Will fondly open to an earthly friend —
Thousands thou hast till now redeem'd and bless'd,
Thou wilt at length conclude by blessing one!
JOHAN. Art weary, dauphin, of the heavenly vision,
That thou its vessel wouldst annihilate?
The holy maiden, sent to thee by God,
Degrade, reducing her to common dust?
Ye blind of heart! O ye of little faith!
God's glory shines around you; to your gaze
He doth reveal his wonders, and ye see
Nought but a woman in me. Dare a woman

In iron panoply array herself,
And boldly mingle in the strife of men?
Woe, woe is me! If e'er my hand should wield
The avenging sword of God, and my vain heart
Cherish affection to a mortal man!
'Twere better for me I had ne'er been born!
Henceforth no more of this, unless ye would
Provoke the Spirit's wrath who in me dwells!
The eye of man, regarding me with love,
To me is horror and profanity.

CHAS. Forbear! It is in vain to urge her further.

JOHAN. Command the trumpets of the war to sound!
This stillness doth perplex and harass me;
An inward impulse drives me from repose,
It still impels me to achieve my work,
And sternly beckons me to meet my doom.

SCENE V.

A Knight, entering hastily.

CHAS. What tidings? Speak!

KNIGHT. The foe has crossed the Marne,
And marshalleth his army for the fight.

JOHAN. (*inspired*) Battle and tumult! Now my soul is free.
Arm, warriors, arm! while I prepare the troops.
[*She goes out.*

CHAS. Follow, La Hire! E'en at the gates of Rheims
They will compel us to dispute the crown!

DUNOIS. No genuine courage prompts them. This essay
Is the last effort of enraged despair.

CHAS. I do not urge you, duke. To-day's the time
To compensate the errors of the past.
BURG. You shall be satisfied with me.
CHAS. Myself
Will march before you on the path of fame;
Here, with my royal town of Rheims in view,
I'll fight, and gallantly achieve the crown.
Thy knight, my Agnes, bids thee now farewell!
AGNES. (*embracing him*) I do not weep, I do not tremble for thee;
My faith, unshaken, cleaveth unto God!
Heaven, were we doom'd to failure, had not given
So many gracious pledges of success!
My heart doth whisper me that, victory-crown'd,
In conquer'd Rheims, I shall embrace my king.

[*Trumpets sound with a spirited tone, and, while the scene is changing, pass into a wild martial strain. When the scene opens, the orchestra joins in, accompanied by warlike instruments behind the scene.*

SCENE VI.

The scene changes to an open country, skirted with trees. During the music, soldiers are seen retreating hastily across the background.

TALBOT, *leaning on* FASTOLFE, *and accompanied by soldiers. Soon after,* LIONEL.

TALBOT. Here lay me down, beneath these trees, and then
Betake you back, with speed, unto the fight;
I need no aid to die.
FAST. O woful day! [LIONEL *enters.*
Behold what sight awaits you, Lionel!

Here lies our general, wounded unto death.
LIONEL. Now, God forbid! My noble lord, arise!
No moment this to falter and to sink.
Yield not to death. By your all-powerful will,
Command your ebbing spirit still to live.
TALBOT. In vain! The day of destiny is come,
Which will o'erthrow the English power in France.
In desperate combat I have vainly risk'd
The remnant of our force to ward it off.
Struck by the thunderbolt I prostrate lie,
Never to rise again. — Rheims now is lost,
Hasten to succour Paris!
LIONEL. Paris is with the dauphin reconcil'd;
A courier even now hath brought the news.
TALBOT. (*tearing off his bandages*) Then freely flow,
ye currents of my blood,
For Talbot now is weary of the sun!
LIONEL. I may no longer tarry: Fastolfe, haste!
Convey our leader to a place of safety.
No longer now can we maintain this post;
Our flying troops disperse on every side,
On, with resistless might, the Maiden comes.
TALBOT. Folly, thou conquerest, and I must yield!
Against stupidity the very gods
Themselves contend in vain. Exalted reason,
Resplendent daughter of the head divine,
Wise foundress of the system of the world,
Guide of the stars, who art thou then, if thou,
Bound to the tail of folly's uncurb'd steed,
Must, vainly shrieking, with the drunken crowd,
Eyes open, plunge down headlong in the abyss.
Accurs'd, who striveth after noble ends,
And with deliberate wisdom forms his plans!
To the fool-king belongs the world —
LIONEL. My lord,
But for a few brief moments can you live —
Think of your Maker!

TALBOT. Had we, like brave men,
Been vanquished by the brave, we might, indeed,
Console ourselves that 'twas the common lot;
For fickle Fortune aye revolves her wheel.
But to be baffled by such juggling arts!
Deserv'd our earnest and laborious life
Not a more earnest issue?

LIONEL. (*extends his hand to him*) Fare you well!
The debt of honest tears I will discharge
After the battle — if I then survive.
Now Fate doth call me hence, where on the field
Her web she weaveth, and dispenseth doom.
We in another world shall meet again;
For our long friendship, this a brief farewell. [*Exit.*

TALBOT. Soon is the struggle past, and to the earth,
To the eternal sun, I render back
These atoms, join'd in me for pain and pleasure.
And of the mighty Talbot, who the world
Fill'd with his martial glory, there remains
Nought save a modicum of senseless dust.
— Such is the end of man! — the only spoil
We carry with us from life's battle-field
Is but an insight into nothingness,
And utter scorn of all which once appear'd
To us exalted and desirable. —

SCENE VII.

CHARLES, BURGUNDY, DUNOIS, DU CHATEL, *and Soldiers.*

BURG. The trench is storm'd!
DUNOIS. The victory is ours!
CHAS. (*perceiving* TALBOT) Look! Who is he, who yonder of the sun
Taketh reluctant, sorrowful farewell?

His armour indicates no common man;
Go, succour him, if aid may yet avail.
[*Soldiers of the* KING'S *retinue step forward.*
FAST. Back! Stand apart! Respect the mighty dead,
Whom ye, in life, ne'er ventur'd to approach!
BURG. What do I see, Lord Talbot in his blood!
[*He approaches him.* TALBOT *gazes fixedly at him and dies.*
FAST. Traitor, avaunt! Let not the sight of thee
Poison the dying hero's parting glance.
DUNOIS. Resistless hero! Dread-inspiring Talbot!
Does such a narrow space suffice thee now,
And this vast kingdom could not satisfy
The large ambition of thy giant soul!
— Now first I can salute you, Sire, as king:
The diadem but totter'd on your brow,
While yet a spirit tenanted this clay.
CHAS. (*after contemplating the body in silence*) A higher power hath vanquish'd him, not we!
He lies upon the soil of France, as lies
The hero on the shield he would not quit.
Well, peace be with his ashes! Bear him hence!
[*Soldiers take up the body and carry it away.*
Here, in the heart of France, where his career
Of conquest ended, let his reliques lie!
So far no hostile sword attain'd before.
A fitting tomb shall memorise his name;
His epitaph the spot whereon he fell.
FAST. (*yielding his sword*) I am your prisoner, sir.
CHAS. (*returning his sword*) Not so! Rude war
Respects each pious office; you are free
To render the last honours to the dead.
Go now, Du Chatel, — still my Agnès trembles —
Hasten to snatch her from anxiety —
Bring her the tidings of our victory,
And usher her in triumph into Rheims!
[*Exit* DU CHATEL.

Scene VIII.

The same. La Hire.

Dunois. La Hire, where is the Maiden?
Hire. That I ask
Of you; I left her fighting by your side.
Dunois. I thought she was protected by your arm,
When I departed to assist the king.
Burg. Not long ago I saw her banner wave
Amid the thickest of the hostile ranks.
Dunois. Alas! where is she? Evil I forebode!
Come, let us haste to rescue her. — I fear
Her daring soul hath led her on too far;
Alone, she combats in the midst of foes,
And without succour yieldeth to the crowd.
Chas. Haste to her rescue!
Hire. Come!
Burg. We follow all!
[*Exit. They retire in haste.*

A deserted part of the battle-field. In the distance are seen the towers of Rheims illumined by the sun.

Scene IX.

A Knight *in black armour, with closed visor.* Johanna *follows him to the front of the stage, where he stops and awaits her.*

Johan. Deluder! now I see thy stratagem!
Thou hast deceitfully, through seeming flight,
Allur'd me from the battle, doom and death
Averting thus from many a British head.
Destruction now doth overtake thyself.

"Amid the thickest of the hostile ranks"

Photogravure from the painting by J. E. Lenepveu

KNIGHT. Why dost thou follow after me and track
My steps with quenchless rage? I am not doom'd
To perish by thy hand.
JOHAN. Deep in my soul
I hate thee as the night, which is thy colour
To blot thee out from the fair light of day;
An irresistible desire impels me.
Who art thou? Raise thy visor. — I had said
That thou wert Talbot, had I not myself
Seen warlike Talbot in the battle fall.
KNIGHT. Is the divining Spirit mute in thee?
JOHAN. His voice speaks loudly in my Spirit's depths
The near approach of woe.
BLACK KNIGHT. Johanna D'Arc!
Borne on the wings of conquest, thou hast reach'd
The gates of Rheims. Let thy achiev'd renown
Content thee. Fortune, like thy slave, till now
Hath follow'd thee; dismiss her, ere in wrath
She free herself; fidelity she hates;
She serveth none with constancy till death.
JOHAN. Why check me in the midst of my career?
Why bid me falter and forsake my work?
I will complete it, and fulfil my vow!
KNIGHT. Nothing can thee, thou mighty one, withstand.
In battle thou art aye invincible.
— But henceforth shun the fight; attend my warning!
JOHAN. Not from my hand will I resign this sword
Till haughty England's prostrate in the dust.
KNIGHT. Behold! there Rheims ariseth with its towers,
The goal and end of thy career. — Thou seest
The lofty minster's sun-illumin'd dome;
Thou in triumphal pomp wouldst enter there,
Thy monarch crown, and ratify thy vow.
— Enter not there! Return! Attend my warning!

JOHAN. What art thou, double-tongu'd, deceitful being,
Who wouldst bewilder and appal me? Speak!
By what authority dost thou presume
To greet me with fallacious oracles?
[*The* BLACK KNIGHT *is about to depart, she steps in his way.*
No, thou shalt speak, or perish by my hand!
[*She endeavours to strike him.*
BLACK KNIGHT. (*touches her with his hand, she remains motionless*)
Slay what is mortal!
[*Darkness, thunder and lightning. The* KNIGHT *sinks into the earth.*
JOHAN. (*stands at first in amazement, but soon recovers herself*)
'Twas nothing living. 'Twas a base delusion,
An instrument of hell, a juggling fiend,
Uprisen hither from the fiery pool
To shake and terrify my steadfast heart.
Wielding the sword of God, whom should I fear?
I will triumphantly achieve my work.
My courage should not waver, should not fail,
Were hell itself to champion me to fight!
[*She is about to depart.*

SCENE X.

LIONEL, JOHANNA.

LIONEL. Accursed one, prepare thee for the fight!
— Not both of us shall quit this field alive.
Thou hast destroy'd the bravest of our host:
The noble Talbot hath his mighty soul
Breathed forth upon my bosom. — I'll avenge

The hero, or participate his doom.
And wouldst thou know who brings thee glory now,
Whether he live or die, — I'm Lionel,
The sole survivor of the English chiefs,
And still unconquer'd is this valiant arm.

[*He rushes upon her; after a short combat she strikes the sword out of his hand.*

Perfidious fortune!

[*He wrestles with her.* JOHANNA *seizes him by the crest and tears open his helmet; his face is thus exposed; at the same time she draws her sword with her right hand.*

JOHAN. Suffer what thou soughtest!
The Virgin sacrifices thee through me!

[*At this moment she gazes in his face. His aspect softens her, she remains motionless and slowly lets her arm sink.*

LIONEL. Why linger, why withhold the stroke of death?
My glory thou hast taken — take my life!
I want no mercy, I am in thy power.

[*She makes him a sign with her hand to fly.*

How! shall I fly, and owe my life to thee?
No, I would rather die!

JOHAN. (*with averted face*) I will not know
That ever thou didst owe thy life to me.

LIONEL. I hate alike thee and thy proffer'd gift.
I want no mercy — kill thine enemy,
Who loathes and would have slain thee.

JOHAN. Slay me then,
And fly!

LIONEL. Ha! What is this?

JOHAN. (*hiding her face*) Woe's me!

LIONEL. (*approaching her*) 'Tis said
Thou killest all the English whom thy sword
Subdues in battles — why spare me alone?

JOHAN. (*raises her sword with a rapid movement, as if to strike him, but lets it fall quickly when she gazes on his face*)
O Holy Virgin!
LIONEL. Wherefore namest thou
The Holy Virgin! she knows nought of thee;
Heaven hath no part in thee.
JOHAN. (*in the greatest anxiety*) What have I done!
Alas! I've broke my vow!
[*She wrings her hands in despair.*
LIONEL. (*looks at her with sympathy and approaches her*) Unhappy maid!
I pity thee! Thy sorrow touches me;
Thou hast shown mercy unto me alone,
My hatred yielded unto sympathy!
— Who art thou, and whence comest thou?
JOHAN. Away!
LIONEL. Thy youth, thy beauty, move my soul to pity!
Thy look sinks in my heart. I fain would save thee —
How may I do so? tell me. Come! oh come!
Renounce this fearful league — throw down these arms!
JOHAN. I am unworthy now to carry them!
LIONEL. Then throw them from thee — quick! come, follow me!
JOHAN. (*with horror*) How! follow thee!
LIONEL. Thou mayst be saved. Oh, come!
I will deliver thee, but linger not.
Strange sorrow for thy sake doth seize my heart,
Unspeakable desire to rescue thee —
[*He seizes her arm.*
JOHAN. The Bastard comes! 'Tis they! They seek for me.
If they should find thee —
LIONEL. I'll defend thee, maid!
JOHAN. I die if thou shouldst perish by their hands!

LIONEL. Am I then dear to thee?
JOHAN. Ye heavenly powers!
LIONEL. Shall I again behold thee — hear from thee?
JOHAN. No! never!
LIONEL. Thus this sword I seize, in pledge
That I again behold thee! [*He snatches her sword.*
JOHAN. Madman, hold!
Thou darest?
LIONEL. Now I yield to force — again
I'll see thee! [*He retires.*

SCENE XI.

JOHANNA, DUNOIS, LA HIRE.

HIRE. It is she! The Maiden lives!
DUNOIS. Fear not, Johanna! friends are at thy side.
HIRE. Is not that Lionel who yonder flies?
DUNOIS. Let him escape! Maiden, the righteous cause
Hath triumph'd now. Rheims opens wide its gates;
The joyous crowds pour forth to meet their king. —
HIRE. What ails the Maiden? She grows pale — she sinks!
[JOHANNA *grows dizzy, and is about to fall.*
DUNOIS. She's wounded — rend her breastplate — 'tis her arm!
The wound is not severe.
HIRE. Her blood doth flow.
JOHAN. Oh that my life would stream forth with my blood!
[*She lies senseless in* LA HIRE'S *arms.*

ACT IV.

A hall adorned as for a festival; the columns are hung with garlands; behind the scene flutes and hautboys.

SCENE I.

JOHAN. Hushed is the din of arms, war's storms subside,
Glad song and dance succeed the bloody fray,
Through all the streets joy echoes far and wide,
Altar and church are deck'd in rich array,
Triumphal arches rise in vernal pride,
Wreaths round the columns wind their flowery way,
Wide Rheims cannot contain the mighty throng,
Which to the joyous pageant rolls along.

One thought alone doth every heart possess,
One rapt'rous feeling o'er each breast preside,
And those to-day are link'd in happiness
Whom bloody hatred did erewhile divide.
All who themselves of Gallic race confess
The name of Frenchman own with conscious pride,
France sees the splendour of her ancient crown,
And to her monarch's son bows humbly down.

Yet I, the author of this wild delight,
The joy, myself created, cannot share;
My heart is chang'd, in sad and dreary plight
It flies the festive pageant in despair;
Still to the British camp it taketh flight,
Against my will my gaze still wanders there,
And from the throng I steal, with grief oppress'd,
To hide the guilt which weighs upon my breast.

What! I permit a human form
To haunt my bosom's sacred cell?

And there, where heavenly radiance shone,
Doth earthly love presume to dwell?
The saviour of my country, I,
The warrior of God most high,
Burn for my country's foeman? Dare I name
Heaven's holy light, nor feel o'erwhelm'd with shame?

[*The music behind the scene passes into a soft and moving melody.*

Woe is me! Those melting tones!
They distract my 'wilder'd brain!
Every note, his voice recalling,
Conjures up his form again!

Would that spears were whizzing round!
Would that battle's thunder roar'd!
'Midst the wild tumultuous sound
My former strength were then restored.

These sweet tones, these melting voices,
With seductive powers are fraught!
They dissolve, in gentle longing,
Every feeling, every thought,
Waking tears of plaintive sadness!

[*After a pause, with more energy.*

Should I have kill'd him? Could I, when I gazed
Upon his face? Kill'd him? Oh, rather far
Would I have turn'd my weapon 'gainst myself!
And am I culpable because humane?
Is pity sinful? — Pity! Didst thou hear
The voice of pity and humanity,
When others fell the victims of thy sword?
Why was she silent when the gentle youth
From Wales entreated thee to spare his life?
O, cunning heart! Thou liest before high Heaven;

It is not pity's voice impels thee now!
— Why was I doom'd to look into his eyes!
To mark his noble features! With that glance,
Thy crime, thy woe commenc'd. Unhappy one!
A sightless instrument thy God demands,
Blindly thou must accomplish his behest!
When thou didst see, God's shield abandon'd thee,
And the dire snares of hell around thee press'd!

[*Flutes are again heard, and she subsides into a quiet melancholy.*

Harmless staff! Oh, that I ne'er
Had for the sword abandon'd thee!
Had voices never reached mine ear,
From thy branches, sacred tree!
High Queen of Heaven! Oh, would that thou
Hadst ne'er reveal'd thyself to me!
Take back — I dare not claim it now —
Take back thy crown, 'tis not for me!

I saw the heavens open wide,
I gazed upon that face of love!
Yet here on earth my hopes abide,
They do not dwell in heaven above!
Why, Holy One, on me impose
This dread vocation? Could I steel,
And to each soft emotion close,
This heart, by nature form'd to feel?

Would'st thou proclaim thy high command,
Make choice of those who, free from sin,
In thy eternal mansions stand;
Send forth thy flaming cherubim!
Immortal ones, thy law they keep,
They do not feel, they do not weep!
Choose not a tender woman's aid,
Not the frail soul of shepherd maid!

Was I concern'd with warlike things,
With battles or the strife of kings?
In innocence I led my sheep
Adown the mountain's silent steep;
But thou didst send me into life,
'Midst princely halls and scenes of strife,
To lose my spirit's tender bloom:
Alas, I did not seek my doom!

Scene II.

Agnes Sorel, Johanna.

Sorel. (*advances joyfully. When she perceives* Johanna, *she hastens to her and falls upon her neck; then suddenly recollecting herself, she relinquishes her hold, and falls down before her*)
No! no! not so! Before thee in the dust —
Johan. (*trying to raise her*) Arise! Thou dost forget thyself and me.
Sorel. Forbid me not! 'tis the excess of joy
Which throws me at thy feet — I must pour forth
My o'ercharged heart in gratitude to God;
I worship the Invisible in thee.
Thou art the angel who hast led my lord
To Rheims, to crown him with the royal crown.
What I ne'er dreamed to see, is realised!
The coronation-march will soon set forth;
Array'd in festal pomp, the monarch stands;
Assembled are the nobles of the realm,
The mighty peers, to bear the insignia;
To the cathedral rolls the billowy crowd;
Glad songs resound, the bells unite their peal;
Oh, this excess of joy I cannot bear!

[JOHANNA *gently raises her.* AGNES SOREL *pauses a moment, and surveys the* MAIDEN *more narrowly.*

Yet thou remainest ever grave and stern;
Thou canst create delight, yet share it not.
Thy heart is cold, thou feelest not our joy,
Thou hast beheld the glories of the skies;
No earthly interest moveth thy pure breast.

[JOHANNA *seizes her hand passionately, but soon lets it fall again.*

Oh, couldst thou own a woman's feeling heart!
Put off this armour, war is over now,
Confess thy union with the softer sex!
My loving heart shrinks timidly from thee,
While thus thou wearest Pallas' brow severe.

JOHAN. What wouldst thou have me do?

SOREL. Unarm thyself!
Put off this coat of mail! The god of love
Fears to approach a bosom clad in steel.
Oh, be a woman, thou wilt feel his power!

JOHAN. What, now unarm myself? 'Midst battle's roar
I'll bare my bosom to the stroke of death!
Not now! — Would that a sevenfold wall of brass
Could hide me from your revels, from myself!

SOREL. Thou'rt loved by Count Dunois. His noble heart,
Which virtue and renown alone inspire,
With pure and holy passion glows for thee.
Oh, it is sweet to know oneself belov'd
By such a hero — sweeter still to love him!

[JOHANNA *turns away with aversion.*

Thou hatest him? — no, no, thou only canst
Not love him: — how could hatred stir thy breast!
Those who would tear us from the one we love,
We hate alone; but none can claim thy love.
Thy heart is tranquil — if it could but feel —

JOHAN. Oh, pity me! Lament my hapless fate!
SOREL. What can be wanting to complete thy joy?
Thou hast fulfill'd thy promise, France is free,
To Rheims, in triumph, thou hast led the king,
Thy mighty deeds have gain'd thee high renown,
A happy people praise and worship thee;
Thy name, the honour'd theme of every tongue;
Thou art the goddess of this festival;
The monarch, with his crown and regal state,
Shines not with greater majesty than thou!
JOHAN. Oh, could I hide me in the depths of earth!
SOREL. Why this emotion? Whence this strange distress?
Who may to-day look up without a fear,
If thou dost cast thine eyes upon the ground!
It is for me to blush, me, who near thee
Feel all my littleness; I cannot reach
Thy lofty virtue, thy heroic strength!
For — all my weakness shall I own to thee?
Not the renown of France, my fatherland,
Not the new splendour of the monarch's crown,
Not the triumphant gladness of the crowds,
Engage this woman's heart. One only form
Is in its depths enshrin'd; it hath not room
For any feeling save for one alone:
He is the idol, him the people bless,
Him they extol, for him they strew these flowers,
And he is mine, he is my own true love!
JOHAN. Oh, thou art happy! thou art bless'd indeed!
Thou lovest where all love. Thou mayst, unblamed,
Pour forth thy rapture, and thine inmost heart
Fearless discover to the gaze of man!
Thy country's triumph is thy lover's too.
The vast, innumerable multitudes,
Who, rolling onward, crowd within these walls,
Participate thy joy, they hallow it;

Thee they salute, for thee they twine the wreath,
Thou art a portion of the general joy;
Thou lovest the all-inspiring soul, the sun,
And what thou seest is thy lover's glory!
SOREL. (*falling on her neck*) Thou dost delight me,
thou canst read my heart!
I did thee wrong, thou knowest what love is,
Thou tell'st my feelings with a voice of power.
My heart forgets its fear and its reserve,
And seeks confidingly to blend with thine —
JOHAN. (*tearing herself from her with violence*)
Forsake me! Turn away! Do not pollute
Thyself by longer intercourse with me!
Be happy! go — and in the deepest night
Leave me to hide my infamy, my woe!
SOREL. Thou frighten'st me, I understand thee not,
I ne'er have understood thee — for from me
Thy dark mysterious being was still veil'd.
Who may divine what thus disturbs thy heart,
Thus terrifies thy pure and sacred soul!
JOHAN. Thou art the pure, the holy one! Couldst
thou
Behold mine inmost heart, thou, shuddering,
Wouldst fly the traitoress, the enemy!

SCENE III.

DUNOIS, DU CHATEL, *and* LA HIRE, *with the Banner of* JOHANNA.

DUNOIS. Johanna, thee we seek. All is prepared;
The king hath sent us, 'tis his royal will
That thou before him shouldst thy banner bear;
The company of princes thou shalt join,
And march immediately before the king:
For he doth not deny it, and the world

Shall witness, Maiden, that to thee alone
He doth ascribe the honour of this day.
HIRE. Here is the banner. Take it, noble Maiden!
Thou'rt stayed for by the princes and the people.
JOHAN. I march before him? I the banner bear?
DUNOIS. Whom else would it become? What other hand
Is pure enough to bear the sacred ensign!
Amid the battle thou hast waved it oft;
To grace our glad procession bear it now.
[LA HIRE *presents the banner to her, she draws back, shuddering.*
JOHAN. Away! away!
HIRE. How! Art thou terrified
At thine own banner, Maiden? — look at it!
[*He displays the banner.*
It is the same thou didst in conquest wave.
Imaged upon it is the Queen of Heaven,
Floating in glory o'er this earthly ball;
For so the Holy Mother show'd it thee.
JOHAN. (*gazing upon it with horror*) 'Tis she herself! so she appear'd to me.
See, how she looks at me and knits her brow,
And anger flashes from her threatening eye!
SOREL. Alas, she raveth! Maiden, be composed!
Collect thyself! Thou seest nothing real!
That is her pictured image; she herself
Wanders above, amid the angelic quire!
JOHAN. Thou comest, fearful one, to punish me?
Destroy, o'erwhelm, thine arrowy lightnings hurl,
And let them fall upon my guilty head.
Alas, my vow I've broken! I've profaned
And desecrated thy most holy name!
DUNOIS. Woe's us! What may this mean? What unblest words?
HIRE. (*in astonishment, to* DU CHATEL) This strange emotion canst thou comprehend?

DU CHAT. That which I see, I see — I long have
fear'd it.
DUNOIS. What sayest thou?
DU CHAT. I dare not speak my thoughts.
I would to Heaven that the king were crown'd!
HIRE. How! hath the awe this banner doth inspire
Turn'd back upon thyself? before this sign
Let Britons tremble; to the foes of France
'Tis fearful, but to all true citizens
It is auspicious.
JOHAN. Yes, thou sayest truly!
To friends 'tis gracious! but to enemies
It causeth horror! [*The Coronation march is heard.*
DUNOIS. Take thy banner, then!
The march begins — no time is to be lost!
[*They press the banner upon her; she seizes it with evident emotion, and retires; the others follow.*
[*The scene changes to an open place before the Cathedral.*

SCENE IV.

Spectators occupy the background; BERTRAND, CLAUDE. MARIE *and* ETIENNE *come forward; then* MARGOT *and* LOUISON. *The Coronation march is heard in the distance.*

BERT. Hark to the music! They approach already!
What had we better do? Shall we mount up
Upon the platform, or press through the crowd,
That we may nothing lose of the procession?
ETIEN. It is not to be thought of. All the streets
Are throng'd with horsemen and with carriages.
Beside these houses let us take our stand;
Here we without annoyance may behold
The train as it goes by.

CLAUDE MARIE. Almost it seems
As were the half of France assembled here;
So mighty is the flood that it hath reached
Even our distant Lotharingian land
And borne us hither!

BERT. Who would sit at home
When great events are stirring in the land!
It hath cost plenty, both of sweat and blood,
Ere the crown rested on its rightful head!
Nor shall our lawful king, to whom we give
The crown, be worse accompanied than he
Whom the Parisians in St. Denis crown'd!
He is no loyal honest-minded man
Who doth absent him from this festival,
And joins not in the cry: "God save the king!"

SCENE V.

MARGOT *and* LOUISON *join them.*

LOUIS. We shall again behold our sister, Margot!
How my heart beats!

MARG. In majesty and pomp
We shall behold her, saying to ourselves:
It is our sister, it is our Johanna!

LOUIS. Till I have seen her, I can scarce believe
That she, whom men the Maid of Orleans name,
The mighty warrior, is indeed Johanna,
Our sister whom we lost! [*The music draws nearer.*

MARG. Thou doubtest still!
Thou wilt thyself behold her!

BERT. See, they come!

Scene VI.

Musicians, with flutes and hautboys, open the procession. Children follow, dressed in white, with branches in their hands; behind them two heralds. Then a procession of halberdiers, followed by magistrates in their robes. Then two marshals with their staves; the Duke of Burgundy, *bearing the sword;* Dunois *with the sceptre, other nobles with the regalia; others with sacrificial offerings. Behind these* Knights *with the ornaments of their order; choristers with incense; two* Bishops *with the ampulla; the* Archbishop *with the crucifix.* Johanna *follows, with her banner, she walks with downcast head and wavering steps; her sisters, on beholding her, express their astonishment and joy. Behind her comes the* King *under a canopy, supported by four barons; courtiers follow, soldiers conclude the procession; as soon as it has entered the church the music ceases.*

Scene VII.

Louison, Margot, Claude Marie, Etienne, Bertrand.

Marg. Saw you our sister?
Claude Marie. She in golden armour,
Who with the banner walked before the king?
Marg. It was Johanna. It was she, our sister!
Louis. She recognised us not! She did not feel
That we, her sisters, were so near to her.
She look'd upon the ground, and seemed so pale,
And trembled so beneath her banner's weight —
When I beheld her, I could not rejoice.

The Coronation at Rheims.

Photogravure from the painting by J. E. Lauprens.

MARG. So now, arrayed in splendour and in pomp,
I have beheld our sister — Who in dreams
Would ever have imagined or conceiv'd,
When on our native hills she drove the flock,
That we should see her in such majesty?
LOUIS. Our father's dream is realised, that we
In Rheims before our sister should bow down.
That is the church which in his dream he saw,
And each particular is now fulfilled.
But images of woe he also saw!
Alas! I'm griev'd to see her raised so high!
BERT. Why stand we idly here? Let's to the church
To view the coronation!
MARG. Yes! Perchance
We there may meet our sister; let us go!
LOUIS. We have beheld her. Let us now return
Back to our village.
MARG. How? Ere we with her
Have interchanged a word?
LOUIS. She doth belong
To us no longer: she with princes stands
And monarchs. — Who are we, that we should seek
With foolish vanity to near her state?
She was a stranger, while she dwelt with us!
MARG. Will she despise, and treat us with contempt?
BERT. The king himself is not ashamed of us,
He kindly greets the meanest of the crowd.
How high so ever she may be exalted,
The king is raised still higher!

[*Trumpets and kettle-drums are heard from the church.*

CLAUDE MARIE. Let's to the church!

[*They hasten to the background, where they are lost among the crowd.*

Scene VIII.

THIBAUT *enters, clad in black.* RAIMOND *follows him and tries to hold him back.*

RAIM. Stay, father Thibaut! Do not join the crowds!
Here, at this joyous festival, you meet
None but the happy, whom your grief offends.
Come! Let us quit the town with hasty steps.
THIB. Hast thou beheld my child? My wretched child?
Didst thou observe her?
RAIM. I entreat you, fly!
THIB. Didst mark her tottering and uncertain steps,
Her countenance, so pallid and disturb'd?
She feels her dreadful state; the hour is come
To save my child, and I will not neglect it.
[*He is about to retire.*
RAIM. What would you do?
THIB. Surprise her, hurl her down
From her vain happiness, and forcibly
Restore her to the God whom she denies.
RAIM. O do not work the ruin of your child!
THIB. If her soul lives, her mortal part may die.
[JOHANNA *rushes out of the church, without her banner. The people press around her, worship her, and kiss her garments. She is detained in the background by the crowd.*
She comes! 'tis she! She rushes from the church;
Her troubled conscience drives her from the fane!
'Tis visibly the judgment of her God!
RAIM. Farewell! Require not my attendance further!
Hopeful I came, and sorrowful depart.

Your daughter once again I have beheld,
And feel again that she is lost to me!
[*He goes out;* THIBAUT *retires on the opposite side.*

SCENE IX.

JOHANNA, *People.* *Afterward her Sisters.*

JOHAN. (*she has freed herself from the crowd and comes forward*)
Remain I cannot — spirits chase me forth!
The organ's pealing tones like thunder sound,
The dome's arch'd roof threatens to o'erwhelm me!
I must escape and seek heaven's wide expanse!
I left my banner in the sanctuary,
Never, oh, never, will I touch it more!
It seem'd to me as if I had beheld
My sisters pass before me like a dream.
'Twas only a delusion! — They, alas!
Are far, far distant — inaccessible —
E'en as my childhood, as mine innocence!
MARG. (*stepping forward*) 'Tis she! It is Johanna!
LOUIS. (*hastening toward her*) O my sister!
JOHAN. Then it was no delusion — you are here —
Thee I embrace, Louison! Thee, my Margot!
Here, in this strange and crowded solitude,
I clasp once more my sister's faithful breast!
MARG. She knows us still, she is our own kind sister.
JOHAN. Your love hath led you to me here so far!
So very far! You are not wroth with her
Who left her home without one parting word!
LOUIS. God's unseen providence conducted thee.
MARG. Thy great renown, which agitates the world,

Which makes thy name the theme of every tongue,
Hath in our quiet village waken'd us,
And led us hither to this festival.
To witness all thy glory we are come;
And we are not alone.
JOHAN. (*quickly*) Our father's here?
Where is he? Why doth he conceal himself?
MARG. Our father is not with us.
JOHAN. Not with you?
He will not see me, then! You do not bring
His blessing for his child?
LOUIS. He knoweth not
That we are here.
JOHAN. Not know it! Wherefore not?
You are embarrass'd, and you do not speak:
You look upon the ground! Where is our father?
MARG. Since thou hast left —
LOUIS. (*making a sign to* MARGOT) Margot!
MARG. Our father hath
Become dejected.
JOHAN. Ah!
LOUIS. Console thyself!
Our sire's forboding spirit well thou know'st!
He will collect himself, and be composed,
When he shall learn from us that thou art happy.
MARG. And thou art happy? Yes, it must be so,
For thou art great and honour'd!
JOHAN. I am so,
Now I again behold you, once again
Your voices hear, whose fond familiar tones
Bring to my mind my dear paternal fields.
When on my native hills I drove my herd,
Then I was happy as in Paradise —
I ne'er can be so more, no, never more!

[*She hides her face on* LOUISON'S *bosom.* CLAUDE MARIE, ETIENNE, *and* BERTRAND *appear, and remain timidly standing in the distance.*

MARG. Come, Bertrand! Claude Marie! Come, Etienne!
Our sister is not proud: she is so gentle,
And speaks so kindly, — more so than of yore,
When in our village she abode with us.

[*They draw near, and hold out their hands;* JOHANNA *gazes on them fixedly, and appears amazed.*

JOHAN. Where am I? Tell me! Was it all a dream,
A long, long dream? And am I now awake?
Am I away from Domremi? Is't so?
I fell asleep beneath the Druid tree,
And I am now awake; and round me stand
The kind familiar forms? I only dream'd
Of all these battles, kings, and deeds of war, —
They were but shadows which before me pass'd;
For dreams are always vivid 'neath that tree.
How did you come to Rheims? How came I here?
No, I have never quitted Domremi!
Confess it to me, and rejoice my heart.

LOUIS. We are at Rheims. Thou hast not merely dream'd
Of these great deeds — thou hast achieved them all.
— Come to thyself, Johanna! Look around —
Thy splendid armour feel, of burnish'd gold!

[JOHANNA *lays her hand upon her breast, recollects herself, and shrinks back.*

BERT. Out of my hand thou didst receive this helm.

CLAUDE MARIE. No wonder thou shouldst think it all a dream;
For nothing in a dream could come to pass
More wonderful than what thou hast achieved.

JOHAN. (*quickly*) Come, let us fly! I will return with you
Back to our village, to our father's bosom.

LOUIS. Oh, come! Return with us!

JOHAN. The people here
Exalt me far above what I deserve!
You have beheld me weak and like a child;
You love me, but you do not worship me!
MARG. Thou wilt abandon this magnificence!
JOHAN. I will throw off the hated ornaments
Which were a barrier 'twixt my heart and yours,
And I will be a shepherdess again,
And, like a humble maiden, I will serve you,
And will with bitter penitence atone
That I above you vainly raised myself!

[*Trumpets sound.*

SCENE X.

The KING *comes forth from the Church. He is in the coronation robes.* AGNES SOREL, ARCHBISHOP, BURGUNDY, DUNOIS, LA HIRE, DU CHATEL, KNIGHTS, COURTIERS, *and* PEOPLE.

Many voices shout repeatedly, while the KING *advances.*

Long live the king! Long live King Charles the Seventh!

[*The trumpets sound. Upon a signal from the* KING, *the* HERALDS *with their staves command silence.*

KING. Thanks, my good people! Thank you for your love!
The crown, which God hath placed upon our brow,
Hath with our valiant swords been hardly won:
With noble blood 'tis wetted; but henceforth
The peaceful olive branch shall round it twine.
Let those who fought for us receive our thanks;
Our pardon, those who join'd the hostile ranks,
For God hath shown us mercy in our need,
And our first royal word shall now be — Mercy!

PEOPLE. Long live the king! Long live King Charles the good!

KING. From God alone, the highest potentate,
The monarchs of the French receive the crown;
But visibly from his almighty hand
Have we received it. [*Turning to the Maiden.*
Here stands the holy delegate of heaven,
Who hath restored to you your rightful king,
And rent the yoke of foreign tyranny!
Her name shall equal that of holy Denis,
The guardian and protector of this realm;
And to her fame an altar shall be rear'd!

PEOPLE. Hail to the Maiden, the deliverer!
[*Trumpets.*

KING. (*to* JOHANNA) If thou art born of woman, like ourselves,
Name aught that can augment thy happiness.
But if thy fatherland is there above,
If in this virgin form thou dost conceal
The radiant glory of a heavenly nature,
From our deluded sense remove the veil,
And let us see thee in thy form of light,
As thou art seen in heaven, that in the dust
We may bow down before thee.

[*A general silence; every eye is fixed upon the Maiden.*

JOHAN. (*with a sudden cry*) God! my father!

SCENE XI.

THIBAUT *comes forth from the crowd and stands opposite to her. Many voices exclaim,*

Her father!

THIB. Yes, her miserable father,
Who did beget her, and whom God impels
Now to accuse his daughter.

BURG. Ha! What's this?

DU CHAT. Now will the fearful truth appear!
THIB. (*to the* KING) Thou think'st
That thou art rescued through the power of God?
Deluded prince! Deluded multitude!
Ye have been rescued through the arts of hell.
[*All step back with horror.*
DUNOIS. Is this man mad?
THIB. Not I, but thou art mad,
And this wise bishop, and these noble lords,
Who think that through a weak and sinful maid
The God of Heaven would reveal himself.
Come, let us see if to her father's face
She will maintain the specious, juggling arts,
Wherewith she hath deluded king and people.
Now, in the name of the blest Trinity,
Belong'st thou to the pure and holy ones?
[*A general silence; all eyes are fixed upon her, she remains motionless.*
SOREL. God! she is dumb!
THIB. Before that awful name,
Which even in the depths of hell is fear'd,
She must be silent! — She a holy one,
By God commission'd? — On a cursed spot
It was conceived, — beneath the Druid tree,
Where evil spirits have from olden time
Their Sabbath held. — There her immortal soul
She barter'd with the enemy of man
For transient worldly glory. Let her bare
Her arm, and ye will see impress'd thereon
The fatal marks of hell!
BURG. Most horrible!
Yet we must needs believe a father's words,
Who 'gainst his daughter gives his evidence!
DUNOIS. No, no! the madman cannot be believed,
Who in his child brings shame upon himself!
SOREL. (*to* JOHANNA) Oh, Maiden, speak! this fatal silence break!

We firmly trust thee! we believe in thee!
One syllable from thee, one single word,
Shall be sufficient — speak! annihilate
This horrid accusation! — But declare
Thine innocence, and we will all believe thee.

[JOHANNA *remains motionless;* AGNES *steps back with horror.*

HIRE. She's frighten'd. Horror and astonishment
Impede her utterance. — Before a charge
So horrible e'en innocence must tremble.

[*He approaches her.*

Collect thyself, Johanna! innocence
Hath a triumphant look, whose lightning flash
Strikes slander to the earth! In noble wrath
Arise! look up, and punish this base doubt,
An insult to thy holy innocence.

[JOHANNA *remains motionless;* LA HIRE *steps back; the excitement increases.*

DUNOIS. Why do the people fear — the princes tremble?
I'll stake my honour on her innocence!
Here on the ground I throw my knightly gage —
Who now will venture to maintain her guilt?

[*A loud clap of thunder; all are horror-struck.*

THIB. Answer, by Him whose thunders roll above!
Give me the lie. Proclaim thine innocence;
Say that the enemy hath not thy heart!

[*Another clap of thunder, louder than the first; the people fly on all sides.*

BURG. God guard and save us! What appalling signs!

DU CHAT. (*to the* KING) Come, come, my king! forsake this fearful place!

ARCHB. (*to* JOHANNA) I ask thee in God's name. Art thou thus silent
From consciousness of innocence or guilt?
If in thy favour the dread thunder speaks,

Touch with thy hand this cross and give a sign!

[JOHANNA *remains motionless. More violent peals of thunder. The* KING, AGNES SOREL, *the* ARCHBISHOP, BURGUNDY, LA HIRE, DU CHATEL *retire.*

SCENE XII.

DUNOIS, JOHANNA.

DUNOIS. Thou art my wife — I have believed in thee
From the first glance, and I am still unchanged.
In thee I have more faith than in these signs,
Than in the thunder's voice, which speaks above
In noble anger thou art silent thus;
Envelop'd in thy holy innocence,
Thou scornest to refute so base a charge.
— Still scorn it, Maiden, but confide in me;
I never doubted of thine innocence.
Speak not one word — only extend thy hand,
In pledge and token that thou wilt confide
In my protection and thine own good cause.

[*He extends his hand to her; she turns from him with a convulsive motion; he remains transfixed with horror.*

SCENE XIII.

JOHANNA, DU CHATEL, DUNOIS, *afterward* RAIMOND.

DU CHAT. (*returning*) Johanna D'Arc! uninjured from the town
The king permits you to depart. The gates
Stand open to you. Fear no injury, —
You are protected by the royal word.

Come, follow me, Dunois! — You cannot here
Longer abide with honour. — What an issue!

[*He retires.* DUNOIS *recovers from his stupor, casts one look upon* JOHANNA, *and retires. She remains standing for a moment quite alone. At length* RAIMOND *appears; he regards her for a time with silent sorrow, and then, approaching, takes her hand.*

RAIM. Embrace this opportunity. The streets
Are empty now. — Your hand! I will conduct you.

[*On perceiving him, she gives the first sign of consciousness. She gazes on him fixedly, and looks up to heaven; then, taking his hand, she retires.*

ACT V.

A wild wood: charcoal-burners' huts in the distance. It is quite dark; violent thunder and lightning; firing heard at intervals.

SCENE I.

CHARCOAL-BURNER *and his* WIFE.

CH. B. This is a fearful storm, the heavens seem
As they would vent themselves in streams of fire;
So thick the darkness which usurps the day,
That one might see the stars. The angry winds
Bluster and howl like spirits loosed from hell.
The firm earth trembles, and the aged elms,
Groaning, bow down their venerable tops;
Yet this terrific tumult, o'er our heads,
Which teacheth gentleness to savage beasts,
So that they seek the shelter of their caves,

Appeaseth not the bloody strife of men —
Amidst the raging of the wind and storm,
At intervals is heard the cannon's roar;
So near the hostile armaments approach,
The wood alone doth part them; any hour
May see them mingle in the shock of battle.

WIFE. May God protect us then! — Our enemies,
Not long ago, were vanquish'd and dispersed.
How comes it that they trouble us again?

CH. B. Because they now no longer fear the king.
Since that the Maid turned out to be a witch,
At Rheims, the devil aideth us no longer,
And things have gone against us.

WIFE. Who comes here?

SCENE II.

RAIMOND *and* JOHANNA *enter.*

RAIM. See! here are cottages; in them at least
We may find shelter from the raging storm.
You are not able longer to endure it.
Three days already you have wander'd on,
Shunning the eye of man — wild herbs and roots
Your only nourishment. Come, enter in.
These are kind-hearted cottagers.

[*The storm subsides; the air grows bright and clear.*

CH. B. You seem
To need refreshment and repose — you're welcome
To what our humble roof can offer you!

WIFE. What has a tender maid to do with arms?
Yet truly! these are rude and troublous times,
When even women don the coat of mail!
The queen herself, proud Isabel, 'tis said,
Appears in armour in the hostile camp;

And a young maid, a shepherd's lowly daughter,
Has led the armies of our lord the king.

CH. B. What sayest thou? Enter the hut, and bring
A goblet of refreshment for the damsel.

[*She enters the hut.*

RAIM. (*to* JOHANNA) All men, you see, are not so cruel; here
E'en in the wilderness are gentle hearts.
Cheer up! the pelting storm hath spent its rage,
And, beaming peacefully, the sun declines.

CH. B. I fancy, as you travel thus in arms,
You seek the army of the king. — Take heed!
Not far remote the English are encamp'd,
Their troops are roaming idly through the wood.

RAIM. Alas for us! how then can we escape?

CH. B. Stay here till from the town my boy returns,
He shall conduct you safe by secret paths.
You need not fear — we know each hidden way.

RAIM. (*to* JOHANNA) Put off your helmet and your coat-of-mail,
They will not now protect you, but betray.

[JOHANNA *shakes her head.*

CH. B. The maid seems very sad — hush! who comes here?

SCENE III.

CHARCOAL-BURNER'S WIFE *comes out of the hut with a bowl.* *A* BOY.

WIFE. It is our boy, whom we expected back.

[*To* JOHANNA.

Drink, noble maiden! may God bless it to you!

CH. B. (*to his son*) Art come, Anet? What news?
[*The boy looks at* JOHANNA, *who is just raising the bowl to her lips; he recognises her, steps forward and snatches it from her.*
BOY. O mother! mother!
Whom do you entertain? This is the witch
Of Orleans!
CH. B. (*and his* WIFE) God be gracious to our souls! [*They cross themselves and fly.*

SCENE IV.

RAIMOND, JOHANNA.

JOHAN. (*calmly and gently*) Thou seest, I am follow'd by the curse,
And all fly from me. Do thou leave me too;
Seek safety for thyself.
RAIM. I leave thee! now!
Alas! who then would bear thee company?
JOHAN. I am not unaccompanied. Thou hast
Heard the loud thunder rolling o'er my head;
My destiny conducts me. Do not fear;
Without my seeking I shall reach the goal.
RAIM. And whither wouldst thou go? Here stand our foes,
Who have against thee bloody vengeance sworn —
There stand our people, who have banish'd thee —
JOHAN. Nought will befall me but what Heaven ordains.
RAIM. Who will provide thee food? and who protect thee
From savage beasts, and still more savage men?
Who cherish thee in sickness and in grief?
JOHAN. I know all roots and healing herbs; my sheep

Taught me to know the poisonous from the wholesome;
I understand the movements of the stars,
And the clouds' flight; I also hear the sound
Of hidden springs. Man hath not many wants,
And nature richly ministers to life.

RAIM. (*seizing her hand*) Wilt thou not look within?
Oh, wilt thou not
Repent thy sin, be reconciled to God,
And to the bosom of the Church return?

JOHAN. Thou hold'st me guilty of this heavy sin?

RAIM. Needs must I — thou didst silently confess —

JOHAN. Thou, who hast followed me in misery,
The only being who continued true,
Who clave to me when all the world forsook,
Thou also hold'st me for a reprobate,
Who hath renounced her God —
[RAIMOND *is silent.*
Oh this is hard!

RAIM. (*in astonishment*) And thou wert really then no sorceress?

JOHAN. A sorceress!

RAIM. And all these miracles
Thou hast accomplish'd through the power of God
And of his holy saints?

JOHAN. Through whom besides?

RAIM. And thou wert silent to that fearful charge?
Thou speakest now, and yet before the king,
When words would have avail'd thee, thou wert dumb!

JOHAN. I silently submitted to the doom
Which God, my lord and master, o'er me hung.

RAIM. Thou couldst not to thy father aught reply?

JOHAN. Coming from him, methought it came from God;
And fatherly the chastisement will prove.

RAIM. The heavens themselves bore witness to thy guilt.

JOHAN. The heavens spoke, and therefore I was silent.

RAIM. Thou with one word couldst clear thyself and hast
In this unhappy error left the world?

JOHAN. It was no error — 'twas the will of Heaven.

RAIM. Thou innocently sufferedst this shame,
And no complaint proceeded from thy lips!
I am amazed at thee, I stand o'erwhelm'd.
My heart is troubled in its inmost depths,
Most gladly I receive the word as truth,
For to believe thy guilt was hard indeed.
But could I ever dream a human heart
Would meet in silence such a fearful doom!

JOHAN. Should I deserve to be Heaven's messenger,
Unless the Master's will I blindly honour'd?
And I am not so wretched as thou thinkest.
I feel privation — this in humble life
Is no misfortune; I'm a fugitive, —
But in the waste I learned to know myself.
When honour's dazzling radiance round me shone,
There was a painful struggle in my breast;
I was most wretched, when to all I seem'd
Most worthy to be envied. — Now my mind
Is heal'd once more, and this fierce storm in nature,
Which threaten'd your destruction, was my friend;
It purified alike the world and me!
I feel an inward peace — and, come what may,
Of no more weakness am I conscious now!

RAIM. Oh, let us hasten! come, let us proclaim
Thine innocence aloud to all the world!

JOHAN. He who sent this delusion will dispel it!
The fruit of fate falls only when 'tis ripe!
A day is coming that will clear my name,
When those who now condemn and banish me
Will see their error and will weep my doom.

RAIM. And shall I wait in silence, until chance —

JOHAN. (*gently taking his hand*) Thy sense is
shrouded by an earthly veil,
And dwelleth only on external things.
Mine eye hath gazed on the invisible!
— Without permission from our God no hair
Falls from the head of man. — Seest thou the sun
Declining in the west? So certainly
As morn returneth in her radiant light,
Infallibly the day of truth shall come!

SCENE V.

QUEEN ISABEL, *with* SOLDIERS, *appears in the background.*

ISABEL. (*behind the scene*) This is the way toward
the English camp!
RAIM. Alas! the foe!
[*The soldiers advance, and perceiving* JOHANNA
fall back in terror.
ISABEL. What now obstructs the march?
SOL. May God protect us!
ISABEL. Do ye see a spirit?
How! Are ye soldiers? Ye are cowards all!
[*She presses forward, but starts back on beholding
the Maiden.*
What do I see!
[*She collects herself quickly and approaches her.*
Submit thyself! Thou art
My prisoner.
JOHAN. I am. [RAIMOND *flies in despair.*
ISABEL. (*to the soldiers*) Lay her in chains!
[*The soldiers timidly approach the Maiden; she
extends her arms and is chained.*
Is this the mighty, the terrific one,
Who chased your warriors like a flock of lambs,
Who, powerless now, cannot protect herself?

Doth she work miracles with credulous fools,
And lose her influence when she meets a man?
[*To the Maiden.*
Why didst thou leave the army? Where's Dunois,
Thy knight and thy protector?

JOHAN. I am banished.
[ISABEL, *stepping back astonished.*

ISABEL. What say'st thou? Thou art banished?
By the dauphin?

JOHAN. Inquire no further! I am in thy power,
Decide my fate.

ISABEL. Banish'd because thou hast
Snatched him from ruin, placed upon his brow
The crown at Rheims, and made him King of France?
Banish'd! Therein I recognise my son!
— Conduct her to the camp, and let the host
Behold the phantom before whom they trembled!
She a magician? Her sole magic lies
In your delusion and your cowardice!
She is a fool who sacrificed herself
To save her king, and reapeth for her pains
A king's reward. — Bear her to Lionel. —
The fortune of the French I send him bound;
I'll follow her anon.

JOHAN. To Lionel?
Slay me at once, ere send me unto him.

ISABEL. (*to the soldiers*) Obey your orders, soldiers!
Bear her hence! [*Exit.*

SCENE VI.

JOHANNA, SOLDIERS.

JOHAN. (*to the soldiers*) Ye English, suffer not that
I escape
Alive out of your hands! Revenge yourselves!

Unsheathe your weapons, plunge them in my heart,
And drag me lifeless to your general's feet!
Remember, it was I who slew your heroes,
Who never showed compassion, who poured forth
Torrents of English blood, who, from your sons,
Snatched the sweet pleasure of returning home!
Take now a bloody vengeance! Murder me!
I now am in your power; I may perchance
Not always be so weak.

CONDUCTOR OF THE SOLDIERS. Obey the queen!

JOHAN. Must I be yet more wretched than I was!
Unpitying Virgin! Heavy is thy hand!
Hast thou completely thrust me from thy favour?
No God appears, no angel shows himself.
Closed are heaven's portals, miracles have ceased.
[*She follows the soldiers.*

SCENE VII.

The French Camp.

DUNOIS, *between the* ARCHBISHOP *and* DU CHATEL.

ARCHB. Conquer your sullen indignation, prince!
Return with us! Come back unto your king!
In this emergency abandon not
The general cause, when we are sorely pressed,
And stand in need of your heroic arm.

DUNOIS. Why are ye sorely pressed? Why doth the foe
Again exalt himself? all was achieved;—
France was triumphant — war was at an end;—
The saviour you have banished; you henceforth
May save yourselves; I'll not again behold
The camp wherein the Maid abideth not.

DU CHAT. Think better of it, prince! Dismiss us not
With such an answer!
DUNOIS. Silence, Du Chatel!
You're hateful to me; I'll hear naught from you;
You were the first who doubted of her truth.
ARCHB. Who had not wavered on that fatal day,
And been bewildered, when so many signs
Bore evidence against her! We were stunned,
Our hearts were crushed beneath the sudden blow.
— Who in that hour of dread could weigh the proofs?
Our calmer judgment now returns to us,
We see the Maid as when she walked with us,
Nor have we any fault to charge her with.
We are perplexed; — we fear that we have done
A grievous wrong. — The king is penitent,
The duke remorseful, comfortless La Hire,
And every heart doth shroud itself in woe.
DUNOIS. She a deluder? If celestial truth
Would clothe herself in a corporeal form,
She needs must choose the features of the Maiden.
If purity of heart, faith, innocence,
Dwell anywhere on earth, upon her lips
And in her eyes' clear depths, they find their home!
ARCHB. May the Almighty, through a miracle,
Shed light upon this awful mystery,
Which baffles human insight. — Howsoe'er
This sad perplexity may be resolved,
One of two grievous sins we have committed!
Either in fight we have availed ourselves
Of hellish arms, or banished hence a saint!
And both call down upon this wretched land
The vengeance and the punishment of Heaven!

Scene VIII.

The same, a Nobleman, *afterward* Raimond.

Noble. A shepherd youth inquires after your Highness,
He urgently entreats an interview,
He says, he cometh from the Maiden —
Dunois. Haste!
Conduct him hither! He doth come from her!
[*The* Nobleman *opens the door to* Raimond. Dunois *hastens to meet him.*
Where is she? Where's the Maid?
Raim. Hail! noble prince!
And blessed am I that I find with you
This holy man, the shield of the oppressed,
The father of the poor and destitute!
Dunois. Where is the Maiden?
Archb. Speak, my son, inform us!
Raim. She is not, sir, a wicked sorceress!
To God and all his saints I make appeal.
An error blinds the people. You've cast forth
God's messenger, you've banished innocence!
Dunois. Where is she?
Raim. I accompanied her flight
Toward the wood of Ardennes; there she hath
Revealed to me her spirit's inmost depths;
In torture I'll expire, and will resign
My hopes of everlasting happiness,
If she's not guiltless, sir, of every sin!
Dunois. The sun in heaven is not more pure than she!
Where is she? Speak!
Raim. If God hath turned your hearts,
Oh, hasten, I entreat you — rescue her —
She is a prisoner in the English camp.

DUNOIS. A prisoner say you?
ARCHB. Poor unfortunate!
RAIM. There in the forest, as we sought for shelter,
We were encounter'd by Queen Isabel,
Who seized and sent her to the English host.
O from a cruel death deliver her
Who hath full many a time deliver'd you!
DUNOIS. Sound an alarm! to arms! up! beat the drums!
Forth to the field! Let France appear in arms!
The crown and the palladium are at stake!
Our honour is in pledge! risk blood and life!
She must be rescued ere the day is done! [*Exit.*

A watch-tower — an opening above.

SCENE IX.

JOHANNA *and* LIONEL.

FAST. (*entering hastily*) The people can no longer be restrain'd;
With fury they demand the Maiden's death.
In vain your opposition. Let her die,
And throw her head down from the battlements!
Her blood alone will satisfy the host.
ISABEL. (*coming in*) With ladders they begin to scale the walls.
Appease the angry people! Will you wait
Till in blind fury they o'erthrow the tower,
And we beneath its ruins are destroy'd?
Protect her here you cannot. — Give her up!
LIONEL. Let them storm on! In fury let them rage!
Firm is this castle, and beneath its ruins
I will be buried ere I yield to them.

— Johanna, answer me! only be mine,
And I will shield thee 'gainst a world in arms.
ISABEL. Are you a man?
LIONEL. Thy friends have cast thee off;
To thy ungrateful country thou dost owe
Duty and faith no longer. The false cowards
Who sought thy hand forsake thee in thy need;
They for thy honour venture not the fight,
But I, against my people and 'gainst thine,
Will be thy champion. — Once thou didst confess
My life was dear to thee: in combat then
I stood before thee as thine enemy, —
Thou hast not now a single friend but me!
JOHAN. Thou art my people's enemy and mine.
Between us there can be no fellowship.
Thee I can never love, but if thy heart
Cherish affection for me, let it bring
A blessing on my people. — Lead thy troops
Far from the borders of my fatherland;
Give up the keys of all the captured towns,
Restore the booty, set the captives free,
Send hostages the compact to confirm,
And peace I offer thee in my king's name.
ISABEL. Wilt thou, a captive, dictate laws to us?
JOHAN. It must be done; 'tis useless to delay.
Never, oh, never, will this land endure
The English yoke; sooner will France become
A mighty sepulchre for England's hosts.
Fallen in battle are your bravest chiefs.
Think how you may achieve a safe retreat;
Your fame is forfeited, your power is lost.
ISABEL. Can you endure her raving insolence?

Scene X.

A Captain *enters hastily.*

Capt. Haste, general! Prepare the host for battle!
The French with flying banners come this way,
Their shining weapons glitter in the vale.
Johan. (*with enthusiasm*) My people come this way! Proud England, now,
Forth in the field! now boldly must you fight!
Fast. Deluded woman, moderate your joy!
You will not see the issue of this day.
Johan. My friends will win the fight and I shall die!
The gallant heroes need my arm no more.
Lionel. These dastard enemies I scorn! They have
In twenty battles fled before our arms,
Ere this heroic Maiden fought for them!
All the whole nation I despise, save one,
And this one they have banish'd. — Come, Fastolfe,
We soon will give them such another day
As that of Poictiers, and of Agincourt.
Do you remain within the fortress, queen,
And guard the Maiden till the fight is o'er.
I leave for your protection fifty knights.
Fast. How! general, shall we march against the foe
And leave this raging fury in our rear?
Johan. What! can a fettered woman frighten thee?
Lionel. Promise, Johanna, not to free thyself!
Johan. To free myself is now my only wish.
Isabel. Bind her with triple chains! I pledge my life
That she shall not escape.

[*She is bound with heavy chains.*

LIONEL. (*to* JOHANNA) Thou will'st it so!
Thou dost compel us! still it rests with thee!
Renounce the French, — the English banner bear,
And thou art free, and these rude savage men
Who now desire thy blood shall do thy will!
FAST. (*urgently*) Away, away, my general!
JOHAN. Spare thy words!
The French are drawing near. — Defend thyself!
[*Trumpets sound,* LIONEL *hastens forth.*
FAST. You know your duty, queen! if Fate declares
Against us, should you see our people fly —
ISABEL. (*showing a dagger*) Fear not! She shall not live to see our fall.
FAST. (*to* JOHANNA) Thou knowest what awaits thee, now implore
A blessing on the weapons of thy people! [*Exit.*

SCENE XI.

ISABEL, JOHANNA, SOLDIERS.

JOHAN. Ay! that I will! no power can hinder me.
Hark to that sound, the war march of my people.
How its triumphant notes inspire my heart!
Ruin to England! victory to France!
Up, valiant countrymen! The Maid is near:
She cannot, as of yore, before you bear
Her banner — she is bound with heavy chains;
But freely from her prison soars her soul,
Upon the pinions of your battle song.
ISABEL. (*to a soldier*) Ascend the watch-tower which commands the field,
And thence report the progress of the fight.
[*Soldier ascends.*

JOHAN. Courage, my people! 'Tis the final struggle —
Another victory and the foe lies low!
ISABEL. What seest thou?
SOL. They're already in close fight.
A furious warrior, on a Barbary steed,
In tiger's skin, leads forward the gens d'armes.
JOHAN. That's Count Dunois! on, gallant warrior!
Conquest goes with thee.
SOL. The Burgundian duke
Attacks the bridge.
ISABEL. Would that ten hostile spears
Might his perfidious heart transfix, the traitor!
SOL. Lord Fastolfe gallantly opposes him.
Now they dismount — they combat man to man,
Our people and the troops of Burgundy.
ISABEL. Behold'st thou not the dauphin? Seest thou not
The royal banner wave?
SOL. A cloud of dust
Shrouds everything. I can distinguish nought.
JOHAN. Had he my eyes, or stood I there aloft,
The smallest speck would not elude my gaze!
The wild fowl I can number on the wing,
And mark the falcon in his towering flight.
SOL. There is a fearful tumult near the trench;
The chiefs, it seems, the nobles, combat there.
ISABEL. Still doth our banner wave?
SOL. It proudly floats.
JOHAN. Could I look through the loopholes of the wall,
I with my glance the battle would control!
SOL. Alas! What do I see! Our general's
Surrounded by the foe!
ISABEL. (*points the dagger at* JOHANNA) Die, wretch!
SOL. (*quickly*) He's free!

The gallant Fastolfe in the rear attacks
The enemy — he breaks their serried ranks.
ISABEL. (*withdrawing the dagger*) There spoke thy angel!
SOL. Victory! They fly!
ISABEL. Who fly?
SOL. The French and the Burgundians fly;
The field is cover'd o'er with fugitives.
JOHAN. My God! Thou wilt not thus abandon me!
SOL. Yonder they lead a sorely wounded knight;
The people rush to aid him — he's a prince.
ISABEL. One of our country, or a son of France?
SOL. They loose his helmet — it is Count Dunois.
JOHAN. (*seizes her fetters with convulsive violence*)
And I am nothing but a fetter'd woman!
SOL. Look yonder! Who the azure mantle wears,
Border'd with gold?
JOHAN. That is my lord, the king.
SOL. His horse is restive, plunges, rears, and falls —
He struggles hard to extricate himself —
[JOHANNA *accompanies these words with passionate movements.*
Our troops are pressing on in full career,
They near him, reach him — they surround him now.
JOHAN. Oh, have the heavens above no angels more!
ISABEL. (*laughing scornfully*) Now is the time, deliverer — now deliver!
JOHAN. (*throws herself upon her knees and prays with passionate violence*)
Hear me, O God, in my extremity!
In fervent supplication up to Thee,
Up to thy heaven above, I send my soul.
The fragile texture of a spider's web,
As a ship's cable thou canst render strong;
Easy it is to thine omnipotence
To change these fetters into spiders' webs —

Command it, and these massy chains shall fall,
And these thick walls be rent. Thou, Lord, of old
Didst strengthen Samson, when, enchain'd and blind,
He bore the bitter scorn of his proud foes.
Trusting in thee, he seized with mighty power
The pillars of his prison, bow'd himself,
And overthrew the structure.

SOL. Triumph!

ISABEL. How?

SOL. The king is ta'en!

JOHAN. (*springing up*) Then God be gracious to me!

[*She seizes her chains violently with both hands, and breaks them asunder. At the same moment, rushing upon the nearest soldier, she seizes his sword and hurries out. All gaze after her, transfixed with astonishment.*

SCENE XII.

The same, without JOHANNA.

ISABEL. (*after a long pause*) How was it? Did I dream? Where is she gone?
How did she break these ponderous iron chains?
A world could not have made me credit it,
If I had not beheld it with these eyes.

SOL. (*from the tower*) How? Hath she wings? Hath the wind borne her down?

ISABEL. Is she below?

SOL. She strides amidst the fight:
Her course outspeeds my sight — Now she is here —
Now there — I see her everywhere at once!
— She separates the troops — all yield to her;
The scatter'd French collect — they form anew!
— Alas! what do I see! Our people cast
Their weapons to the ground, our banners sink —

ISABEL. What! Will she snatch from us the victory?

SOL. She presses forward, right toward the king.
She reaches him — she bears him from the fight —
Lord Fastolfe falls — the general is ta'en!

ISABEL. I'll hear no more. Come down!

SOL. Fly, queen! you will be taken by surprise.
Arm'd soldiers are advancing tow'rd the tower.

[*He comes down.*

ISABEL. (*drawing her sword*) Then fight, ye cowards!

SCENE XIII.

LA HIRE, *with soldiers. At his entrance the people of the* QUEEN *lay down their arms.*

HIRE. (*approaching her respectfully*) Queen, submit yourself —
Your knights have yielded — to resist is vain!
— Accept my proffer'd services. Command
Where you would be conducted.

ISABEL. Every place
The same, where I encounter not the dauphin.

[*She resigns her sword, and follows him with the soldiers.*

The scene changes to the battle-field.

SCENE XIV.

Soldiers with flying banners occupy the background. Before them the KING *and the* DUKE OF BURGUNDY *appear, bearing* JOHANNA *in their arms; she is mortally wounded, and apparently lifeless. They advance slowly to the front of the stage.* AGNES SOREL *rushes in.*

SOREL. (*throwing herself on the bosom of the* KING)
You're free — you live — I have you back again!
KING. Yes, I am free — I am so at this price!
[*Pointing to* JOHANNA.
SOREL. Johanna! — God! she's dying!
BURG. She's gone!
An angel passeth hence! See how she lies,
Easy and tranquil, like a sleeping child!
The peace of heaven around her features plays,
The breath of life no longer heaves her breast,
But vital warmth still lingers in her hand.
KING. She's gone! — She never will awaken more,
Her eye will gaze no more on earthly things.
She soars on high, a spirit glorified,
She seeth not our grief, our penitence.
SOREL. Her eyes unclose — she lives!
BURG. (*in astonishment*) Can she return
Back from the grave, triumphant e'en o'er death?
She riseth up! She standeth!
JOHAN. (*standing up, and looking around*) Where am I?
BURG. With thine own people, Maiden — with thy friends!
KING. Supported by thy friend, and by thy king.
JOHAN. (*after looking at him fixedly for some time*)
No! I am not a sorceress! Indeed
I am not one.

KING. Thou'rt holy as an angel;
A cloud of error dimm'd our mental sight.
JOHAN. (*gazing around her with a joyful smile*) And
am I really, then, among my friends,
And am no more rejected and despised?
They curse me not — kindly they look on me!
— Yes, all around me now seems clear again!
That is my king! — the banners these of France!
My banner I behold not — where is it?
Without my banner I dare not appear;
To me it was confided by my Lord,
And I before his throne must lay it down;
I there may show it, for I bore it truly.
KING. (*averting his face*) Give her the banner!
[*It is given to her. She stands quite unsupported, the banner in her hand. The heaven is illumined by a rosy light.*
JOHAN. See you the rainbow yonder in the air?
Its golden portals heaven doth wide unfold,
Amid the angel choir she radiant stands,
The eternal Son she claspeth to her breast,
Her arms she stretcheth forth to me in love.
How is it with me? Light clouds bear me up —
My ponderous mail becomes a winged robe;
I mount — I fly — back rolls the dwindling earth —
Brief is the sorrow — endless is the joy!
[*Her banner falls, and she sinks lifeless on the ground. All remain for some time in speechless sorrow. Upon a signal from the* KING, *all the banners are gently placed over her, so that she is entirely concealed by them.*

The Bride of Messina

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

ISABELLA, Princess of Messina.
DON MANUEL, } her Sons.
DON CÆSAR, }
BEATRICE.
DIEGO, an ancient Servant.
MESSENGERS.
THE ELDERS OF MESSINA, mute.
THE CHORUS, consisting of the Followers of the two Princes.

The Bride of Messina

Scene I.

A spacious hall supported on columns, with entrances on both sides; at the back of the stage a large folding-door leading to a chapel.

Donna Isabella, *in mourning; the* Elders of Messina.

Isab. Forth from my silent-chamber's deep recesses,
Gray fathers of the state, unwillingly
I come; and, shrinking from your gaze, uplift
The veil that shades my widowed brows: — the light
And glory of my days is fled for ever!
And best in solitude and kindred gloom
To hide these sable weeds, this grief-worn frame,
Beseems the mourner's heart. A mighty voice
Inexorable — duty's stern command,
Calls me to life again. —
Not twice the moon
Has filled her orb, since to the tomb ye bore
My princely spouse, your city's lord, whose arm
Against a world of envious foes around
Hurled fierce defiance! Still his spirit lives
In his heroic sons, their country's pride: —
Ye marked how sweetly from their childhood's bloom
They grew in joyous promise to the years
Of manhood's strength; — yet in their secret hearts,

From some mysterious root accurs'd, upsprung
Unmitigable deadly hate, that spurned
All kindred ties, all youthful fond affections,
Still ripening with their thoughtful age; — not mine
The sweet accord of family bliss; tho' each
Awoke a mother's rapture; each alike
Smiled at my nourishing breast! for me alone
Yet lives one mutual thought, of children's love,
In these tempestuous souls dissevered else
By mortal strife and thirst of fierce revenge.
While yet their father reigned, his stern control
Tamed their hot spirits, and with iron yoke
To awful justice bowed their stubborn will:
Obedient to his voice, to outward seeming
They calmed their wrathful mood, nor in array
Ere met, of hostile arms; — yet unappeased
Sat brooding malice in their bosoms' depths;
They little reck of hidden springs whose power
Can quell the torrent's fury: — Scarce their sire
In death had closed his eyes, when, as the spark
That long in smouldering embers sullen lay,
Shoots forth a towering flame; — so unconfined
Burst the wild storm of brothers' hate, triumphant
O'er nature's holiest bands. Ye saw, my friends,
Your country's bleeding wounds, when princely strife
Woke discord's maddening fires, and ranged her sons
In mutual deadly conflict; — all around
Was heard the clash of arms, the din of carnage,
And e'en these halls were stained with kindred gore.
Torn was the state with civic rage, this heart
With pangs that mothers feel; alas! unmindful
Of aught but public woes, and pitiless,
You sought my widow's chamber — there with taunts
And fierce reproaches for your country's ills,
From that polluted spring of brothers' hate
Derived, invoked a parent's warning voice,
And threatening told of people's discontent

And princes' crimes! "Ill fated land! now wasted
By thy unnatural sons, ere long the prey
Of foeman's sword! Oh, haste," you cried, "and end
This strife! bring peace again, or soon Messina
Shall bow to other lords." Your stern decree
Prevailed; this heart, with all a mother's anguish
O'erlaboured, owned the weight of public cares.
I flew, and at my children's feet, distracted,
A suppliant lay; till to my prayers and tears
The voice of nature answered in their breasts!
Here in the palace of their sires, unarmed,
In peaceful guise Messina shall behold
The long inveterate foes; — this is the day!
E'en now I wait the messenger that brings
The tidings of my sons' approach: be ready
To give your princes joyful welcome home
With reverence such as vassals may beseem.
Bethink ye to fulfil your subject duties,
And leave to better wisdom weightier cares.
Dire was their strife to them, and to the state
Fruitful of ills; yet, in this happy bond
Of peace united, know that they are mighty
To stand against a world in arms, nor less
Enforce their sovereign will — against yourselves.

[*The* ELDERS *retire in silence; she beckons to an old attendant who remains.*

ISAB. Diego!

DIEGO. Honoured mistress!

ISAB. Old faithful servant, thou true heart, come near me;
Sharer of all a mother's woes, be thine
The sweet communion of her joys: — my treasure,
Shrined in thy heart, my dear and holy secret,
Shall pierce the envious veil, and shine triumphant
To cheerful day; too long by harsh decrees
Silent and overpowered, affection yet
Shall utterance find in nature's tones of rapture!

And this unprisoned heart leap to the embrace
Of all it holds most dear, returned to glad
My desolate halls; —
So bend thy aged steps
To the old cloistered sanctuary that guards
The darling of my soul, whose innocence
To thy true love — (sweet pledge of happier days!)
Trusting I gave, and asked from fortune's storm
A resting-place and shrine: Oh, in this hour
Of bliss, the dear reward of all thy cares,
Give to my longing arms my child again!

[*Trumpets are heard in the distance.*

Haste! be thy footsteps winged with joy — I hear
The trumpet's blast, that tells, in warlike accents,
My sons are near: —

[*Exit* DIEGO. *Music is heard in an opposite direction, and becomes gradually louder.*

Messina is awake!
Hark! how the stream of tongues hoarse murmuring
Rolls on the breeze, — 'tis they! my mother's heart
Feels their approach, and beats with mighty throes
Responsive to the loud resounding march!
They come! they come! my children! oh, my children!

[*Exit.*

The CHORUS *enters.*

It consists of two semichoruses which enter at the same time from opposite sides, and after marching around the stage range themselves in rows, each on the side by which it entered. One semichorus consists of young knights, the other of older ones, each has its peculiar costume and ensigns. When the two choruses stand opposite to each other, the march ceases, and the two leaders speak.[1]

[1] The first Chorus consists of Cajetan, Berengar, Manfred, Tristan, and eight followers of Don Manuel. The second of Bohemund, Roger, Hippolyte, and nine others of the party of Don Cæsar.

First Chorus (CAJETAN).

I greet ye, glittering halls
Of olden time!
Cradle of kings! Hail! lordly roof,
In pillared majesty sublime!
Sheathed be the sword!
In chains before the portal lies
The fiend with tresses snake-entwined,
Fell Discord!— Gently tread the inviolate floor!
Peace to this royal dome!
Thus by the Furies' brood we swore,
And all the dark avenging deities!

Second Chorus (BOHEMUND).

I rage! I burn! and scarce refrain
To lift the glittering steel on high,
For lo! the Gorgon-visaged train
Of the detested foeman nigh:—
Shall I my swelling heart control?—
To parley deign — or still in mortal strife
The tumult of my soul?
Dire Sister, guardian of the spot, to thee
Awe-struck I bend the knee,
Nor dare with arms profane thy deep tranquillity!

First Chorus (CAJETAN).

Welcome the peaceful strain!
Together we adore the guardian power
Of these august abodes!—
Sacred the hour
To kindred brotherly ties
And reverend holy sympathies;—
Our hearts the genial charm shall own,
And melt awhile at friendship's soothing tone:—
But when in yonder plain

We meet — then peace away!
Come gleaming arms, and battle's deadly fray!

The whole Chorus.

But when in yonder plain
We meet — then peace away!
Come gleaming arms, and battle's deadly fray!

First Chorus (BERENGAR).

I hate thee not — nor call thee foe,
My brother! this our native earth,
The land that gave our fathers birth: —
Of chief's behest the slave decreed.
The vassal draws the sword at need,
For chieftain's rage we strike the blow,
For stranger lords our kindred blood must flow.

Second Chorus (BOHEMUND).

Hate fires their souls — we ask not why; —
At honour's call to fight and die,
Boast of the true and brave!
Unworthy of a soldier's name
Who burns not for his chieftain's fame!

The whole Chorus.

Unworthy of a soldier's name
Who burns not for his chieftain's fame!

One of the Chorus (BERENGAR).

Thus spoke within my bosom's core
  The thought — as hitherward I strayed;
And pensive 'mid the waving store,
  I mused, of autumn's yellow glade: —
These gifts of nature's bounteous reign,
The teeming earth, and golden grain,

Yon elms, among whose leaves entwine
The tendrils of the clustering vine; —
Gay children of our sunny clime, —
Region of spring's eternal prime! —
Each charm should woo to love and joy,
No cares the dream of bliss annoy,
And pleasure through life's summer day
Speed every laughing hour away.
We rage in blood, — O dire disgrace!
For this usurping, alien race;
From some far distant land they came,
Beyond the sun's departing flame.
And owned upon our friendly shore
The welcome of our sires of yore.
Alas! their sons in thraldom pine,
The vassals of this stranger line.

A second (MANFRED).

Yes! pleased, on our land, from his azure way
The sun ever smiles with unclouded ray.
But never, fair isle, shall thy sons repose
'Mid the sweets which the faithless waves enclose.
On their bosom they wafted the corsair bold,
With his dreaded barks to our coast of old.
For thee was thy dower of beauty vain,
'Twas the treasure that lured the spoiler's train.
Oh, ne'er from these smiling vales shall rise
A sword for our vanquished liberties;
'Tis not where the laughing Ceres reigns,
And the jocund lord of the flowery plains: —
Where the iron lies hid in the mountain cave,
Is the cradle of empire — the home of the brave!

[*The folding-doors at the back of the stage are thrown open.* DONNA ISABELLA *appears between her sons,* DON MANUEL *and* DON CÆSAR.

Both Choruses (CAJETAN).

Lift high the notes of praise!
  Behold! where like the awakening sun,
She comes, and from her queenly brow
  Shoots glad-inspiring rays.
    Mistress we bend to thee!

First Chorus.

Fair is the moon amid the starry quire
  That twinkle o'er the sky,
  Shining in silvery mild tranquillity;—
The mother with her sons more fair!
  See! blooming at her side,
She leads the youthful royal pair;
  With gentle grace, and soft maternal pride
  Attempering sweet their manly fire.

Second Chorus (BERENGAR).

From this fair stem a beauteous tree
  With ever springing boughs shall smile,
And with immortal verdure shade our isle.
  Mother of heroes, joy to thee!
Triumphant as the sun thy kingly race
  Shall spread from clime to clime,
  And give a deathless name to rolling time!

ISAB. (*comes forward with her* SONS) Look down!
    benignant Queen of Heaven, and still
This proud tumultuous heart, that in my breast
Swells with a mother's tide of ecstasy,
As blazoned in these noble youths, my image
More perfect shows;— O blissful hour! the first
That comprehends the fulness of my joy,
When long constrained affection dares to pour
In unison of transport from my heart,
Unchecked, a parent's undivided love:

Oh! it was ever one — my sons were twain.
Say — shall I revel in the dream of bliss,
And give my soul to nature's dear emotions?
Is this warm pressure of thy brother's hand
A dagger in thy breast? . . . [*To* DON MANUEL.
Or when my eyes
Feed on that brow with love's enraptured gaze,
Is it a wrong to thee? [*To* DON CÆSAR.
Trembling, I pause,
Lest e'en affection's breath should wake the fires
Of slumbering hate.
[*After regarding both with inquiring looks.*
Speak! In your secret hearts
What purpose dwells? Is it the ancient feud
Unreconciled, that in your father's halls
A moment stilled; beyond the castle gates,
Where sits infuriate War, and champs the bit —
Shall rage anew in mortal bloody conflict?

Chorus (BOHEMUND).

Concord or strife — the Fates' decree
Is bosomed yet in dark futurity! —
What comes, we little heed to know.
Prepared for aught the hour may show!

ISAB. (*looking around*) What mean these arms?
this warlike dread array,
That in the palace of your sires portends
Some fearful issue? needs a mother's heart,
Outpoured, this rugged witness of her joys?
Say, in these folding arms shall treason hide
The deadly snare? — O these rude pitiless men,
The ministers of your wrath! — trust not the show
Of seeming friendship; treachery in their breasts
Lurks to betray, and long-dissembled hate.
Ye are a race of other lands; your sires

Profaned their soil; and ne'er the invader's yoke
Was easy — never in the vassal's heart
Languished the hope of sweet revenge; — our sway,
Not rooted in a people's love, but owns
Allegiance from their fears; with secret joy —
For conquest's ruthless sword, and thraldom's chains
From age to age, they wait the atoning hour
Of princes' downfall; — thus their bards awake
The patriot strain, and thus from sire to son
Rehearsed, the old traditionary tale
Beguiles the winter's night. False is the world,
My sons, and light are all the specious ties
By fancy twined: Friendship — deceitful name —
Its gaudy flowers but deck our summer fortune,
To wither at the first rude breath of autumn!
So happy to whom Heaven has given a brother;
The friend by nature signed — the true and steadfast!
Nature alone is honest — Nature only —
When all we trusted strews the wintry shore —
On her eternal anchor lies at rest,
Nor heeds the tempest's rage.

DON M. My mother!

DON C. Hear me!

ISAB. (*taking their hands*) Be noble, and forget the fancied wrongs
Of boyhood's age: more godlike is forgiveness
Than victory, and in your father's grave
Should sleep the ancient hate: — Oh, give your days
Renewed henceforth to peace and holy love!

[*She recedes one or two steps, as if to give them space to approach each other. Both fix their eyes on the ground without regarding one another.*

ISAB. (*after waiting for some time, with suppressed emotion, a demonstration on the part of her sons*)
I can no more; my prayers — my tears are vain: —

'Tis well! obey the demon in your hearts!
Fulfil your dread intent, and stain with blood
The holy altars of our household gods;—
These halls, that gave you birth, the stage where Murder
Shall hold his festival of mutual carnage
Beneath a mother's eye!—then, foot to foot,
Close, like the Theban pair, with maddening gripe,
And fold each other in a last embrace!
Each press with vengeful thrust the dagger home,
And "Victory!" be your shriek of death:—Nor then
Shall discord rest appeased; the very flame
That lights your funeral pyre shall tower dissevered
In ruddy columns to the skies, and tell
With horrid image—"thus they lived and died!"
[*She goes away; the Brothers stand as before.*

Chorus (CAJETAN).

How have her words with soft control
Resistless calmed the tempest of my soul!
No guilt of kindred blood be mine!
Thus with uplifted hands I pray;
Think, brothers, on the awful day,
And tremble at the wrath divine!

DON C. (*without taking his eyes from the ground*)
Thou art my elder—speak—without dishonour
I yield to thee.
DON M. One gracious word, and instant,
My tongue is rival in the strife of love!
DON C. I am the guiltier—weaker—
DON M. Say not so!
Who doubts thy noble heart knows thee not well;
Thy words were prouder, if thy soul were mean.
DON C. It burns indignant at the thought of wrong;—

But thou — methinks, in passion's fiercest mood,
'Twas aught but scorn that harboured in thy breast.
DON M. Oh! had I known thy spirit thus to peace
Inclined, what thousand griefs had never torn
A mother's heart!
DON C. I find thee just and true:
Men spoke thee proud of soul.
DON M. The curse of greatness! —
Ears ever open to the babbler's tale.
DON C. Thou art too proud to meanness — I to falsehood!
DON M. We were deceived, betrayed!
DON C. The sport of frenzy!
DON M. And said my mother true, false is the world?
DON C. Believe her, false as air.
DON M. Give me thy hand!
DON C. And thine be ever next my heart!
[*They stand clasping each other's hands, and regard each other in silence.*
DON M. I gaze
Upon thy brow, and still behold my mother
In some dear lineament.
DON C. Her image looks
From thine, and wondrous in my bosom wakes
Affection's springs.
DON M. And is it thou? — that smile
Benignant on thy face? — thy lips that charm
With gracious sounds of love and dear forgiveness?
DON C. Is this my brother, this the hated foe?
His mien all gentleness and truth — his voice —
Whose soft prevailing accents breathe of friendship!
[*After a pause.*
DON M. Shall aught divide us?
DON C. We are one for ever!
[*They rush into each other's arms.*

FIRST CHORUS. (*to the Second*)
Why stand we thus, and coldly gaze,
While nature's holy transports burn?
No dear embrace of happier days
The pledge — that discord never shall return!
Brothers are they by kindred band;
We own the ties of home and native land.
[*Both* CHORUSES *embrace.*

A MESSENGER *enters.*

SECOND CHORUS *to* DON C. (BOHEMUND) Rejoice,
my prince, thy messenger returns: —
And mark that beaming smile! the harbinger
Of happy tidings.
MESS. Health to me, and health
To this delivered state! O sight of bliss,
That lights mine eyes with rapture! I behold —
Their hands in sweet accord entwined — the sons
Of my departed lord — the princely pair
Dissevered late by conflict's hottest rage.
DON C. Yes! from the flames of hate, a new-born
phœnix,
Our love aspires!
MESS. I bring another joy —
My staff is green with flourishing shoots.
DON C. (*taking him aside*) O, tell me
Thy gladsome message.
MESS. All is happiness
On this auspicious day; — long sought, the lost one
Is found.
DON C. Discovered! Oh, where is she? Speak!
MESS. Within Messina's walls she lies concealed.
DON M. (*turning to the* FIRST SEMICHORUS) A
ruddy glow mounts in my brother's cheek,
And pleasure dances in his sparkling eye;
Whate'er the spring, with sympathy of love

My inmost heart partakes his joy.
DON C. (*to the* MESSENGER) Come, lead me;
Farewell, Don Manuel — to meet again
Enfolded in a mother's arms! I fly
To cares of utmost need. [*He is about to depart.*
DON M. Make no delay;
And happiness attend thee!
DON C. (*after a pause of reflection he returns*) How thy looks
Awake my soul to transport! Yes, my brother,
We shall be friends indeed! This hour is bright
With glad presage of ever-springing love,
That in the enlivening beam shall flourish fair,
Sweet recompense of wasted years!
DON M. The blossom
Betokens goodly fruit.
DON C. I tear myself
Reluctant from thy arms, but think not less —
If thus I break this festal hour — my heart
Thrills with a holy joy.
DON M. (*with manifest absence of mind*) Obey the moment!
Our lives belong to love.
DON C. What calls me hence —
DON M. Enough! thou leav'st thy heart.
DON C. No envious secret
Shall part us long; soon the last darkening fold
Shall vanish from my breast. [*Turning to the* CHORUS.
Attend! For ever
Stilled is our strife; he is my deadliest foe,
Detested as the gates of hell, who dares
To blow the fires of discord: — none may hope
To win my love, that with malicious tales
Encroach upon a brother's ear, and point,
With busy zeal of false officious friendship,
The dart of some rash angry word, escaped
From passion's heat: — it wounds not from the lips,

But swallowed by suspicion's greedy ear,
Like a rank poisonous weed, embittered creeps,
And hangs about the heart with thousand shoots,
Perplexing nature's ties.

[*He embraces his brother again, and goes away, accompanied by the* SECOND CHORUS.

Chorus. (CAJETAN) Wondering, my prince,
I gaze, for in thy looks some mystery
Strange-seeming shows: scarce with abstracted mien
And cold thou answered'st, when with earnest heart
Thy brother poured the strain of dear affection.
As in a dream thou stand'st, and lost in thought
As tho' — dissevered from its earthly frame —
Thy spirit roved afar. Not thine the breast
That, deaf to nature's voice, ne'er owned the throbs
Of kindred love: — nay more — like one entranced
In bliss, thou look'st around, and smiles of rapture
Play on thy cheek.

DON M. How shall my lips declare
The transports of my swelling heart? My brother
Revels in glad surprise, and from his breast,
Instinct with strange new-felt emotions, pours
The tide of joy; but mine — no hate came with me,
Forgot the very spring of mutual strife!
High o'er this earthly sphere, on rapture's wings,
My spirit floats; and in the azure sea,
Above — beneath — no track of envious night
Disturbs the deep serene! I view these halls,
And picture to my thoughts the timid joy
Of my sweet bride, as thro' the palace gates,
In pride of queenly state, I lead her home.
She loved alone the loving one, the stranger,
And little deems that on her beauteous brow
Messina's prince shall 'twine the nuptial wreath.
How sweet, with unexpected pomp of greatness,
To glad the darling of my soul! — too long
I brook this dull delay of crowning bliss!

Her beauty's self, that asks no borrow'd charm,
Shall shine refulgent, like the diamond's blaze
That wins new lustre from the circling gold!

Chorus. (CAJETAN) Long have I marked thee, prince, with curious eye,
Foreboding of some mystery deep enshrined
Within thy labouring breast. This day, impatient,
Thy lips have burst the seal; and unconstrained
Confess a lover's joy; — the gladdening chase,
The Olympian coursers, and the falcon's flight,
Can charm no more: — soon as the sun declines
Beneath the ruddy west, thou hiest thee quick
To some sequestered path, of mortal eye
Unseen — not one of all our faithful train
Companion of thy solitary way.
Say, why so long concealed the blissful flame?
Stranger to fear — ill-brooked thy princely heart
One thought unuttered.

DON M. Ever on the wing
Is mortal joy; — with silence best we guard
The fickle good; — but now, so near the goal
Of all my cherished hopes, I dare to speak.
To-morrow's sun shall see her mine! no power
Of hell can make us twain! With timid stealth
No longer will I creep at dusky eve,
To taste the golden fruits of Cupid's tree,
And snatch a fearful, fleeting bliss: to-day
With bright to-morrow shall be one! So smooth
As runs the limpid brook, or silvery sand
That marks the flight of time, our lives shall flow
In continuity of joy!

Chorus. (CAJETAN) Already
Our hearts, my prince, with silent vows have blessed
Thy happy love; and now from every tongue,
For her — the royal beauteous bride — should sound
The glad acclaim; so tell what nook unseen,
What deep umbrageous solitude, enshrines

The charmer of thy heart? With magic spells
Almost I deem she mocks our gaze, for oft
In eager chase we scour each rustic path
And forest dell; yet not a trace betrayed
The lover's haunts, ne'er were the footsteps marked
Of this mysterious fair.

DON M. The spell is broke!
And all shall be revealed: now list my tale: —
'Tis five months flown, — my father yet controlled
The land, and bowed our necks with iron sway;
Little I knew but the wild joys of arms,
And mimic warfare of the chase; —
One day, —
Long had we tracked the boar with zealous toil
On yonder woody ridge: — it chanced, pursuing
A snow-white hind, far from your train I roved
Amid the forest maze; — the timid beast,
Along the windings of the narrow vale,
Thro' rocky cleft and thick-entangled brake,
Flew onward, scarce a moment lost, nor distant
Beyond a javelin's throw; nearer I came not,
Nor took an aim; when thro' a garden's gate,
Sudden she vanished: — from my horse quick springing,
I followed: — lo! the poor scared creature lay
Stretched at the feet of a young beauteous nun,
That strove with fond caress of her fair hands
To still its throbbing heart: wondering, I gazed,
And motionless — my spear, in act to strike,
High poised — while she, with her large piteous eyes
For mercy sued — and thus we stood in silence,
Regarding one another. . . .
How long the pause
I know not — time itself forgot; — it seemed
Eternity of bliss: her glance of sweetness
Flew to my soul; and quick the subtle flame
Pervaded all my heart: —

But what I spoke,
And how this blessed creature answered, none
May ask; it floats upon my thought, a dream
Of childhood's happy dawn! Soon as my sense
Returned, I felt her bosom throb responsive
To mine, — then fell melodious on my ear
The sound, as of a convent bell, that called
To vesper song; and like some shadowy vision
That melts in air — she flitted from my sight —
And was beheld no more.

Chorus. (CAJETAN) Thy story thrills
My breast with pious awe! Prince, thou hast robbed
The sanctuary, and for the bride of Heaven
Burned with unholy passion! Oh, remember
The cloister's sacred vows!

DON. M Thenceforth one path
My footsteps wooed; the fickle train was still
Of young desires — new felt my being's aim,
My soul revealed! — and as the pilgrim turns
His wistful gaze, where, from the orient sky,
With gracious lustre beams redemption's star; —
So to that brightest point of heaven, her presence,
My hopes and longings centred all. No sun
Sank in the western waves but smiled farewell
To two united lovers: — thus in stillness
Our hearts were twined, — the all-seeing air above us
Alone the faithful witness of our joys!
O golden hours! O happy days! nor Heaven
Indignant viewed our bliss; — no vows enchained
Her spotless soul; nought but the link which bound it
Eternally to mine!

Chorus. (CAJETAN) Those hallowed walls,
Perchance the calm retreat of tender youth,
No living grave?

DON M. In infant innocence
Consigned a holy pledge, ne'er has she left
Her cloistered home.

Chorus. (CAJETAN) But what her royal line?
The noble only spring from noble stem.
DON M. A secret to herself, — she ne'er has learned
Her name or fatherland.
Chorus. (CAJETAN) And not a trace
Guides to her being's undiscovered springs?
DON M. An old domestic, the sole messenger
Sent by her unknown mother, oft bespeaks her
Of kingly race.
Chorus. (CAJETAN) And hast thou won nought else
From garrulous age?
DON. M. Too much I feared to peril
My secret bliss!
Chorus. (CAJETAN) What were his words? What tidings
He bore — perchance thou know'st.
DON M. Oft he has cheered her
With promise of a happier time, when all
Shall be revealed.
Chorus. (CAJETAN) O say — betokens aught
The time is near?
DON M. Not distant far the day
That to the arms of kindred love once more
Shall give the long forsaken, orphaned maid —
Thus with mysterious words the aged man
Has shadowed oft what most I dread — for awe
Of change disturbs the soul supremely blest:
Nay, more; but yesterday his message spoke
The end of all my joys: — this very dawn,
He told, should smile auspicious on her fate,
And light to other scenes: — no precious hour
Delayed my quick resolves — by night I bore her
In secret to Messina.
Chorus. (CAJETAN) Rash the deed
Of sacrilegious spoil! forgive, my prince,
The bold rebuke; thus to unthinking youth
Old age may speak in friendship's warning voice.

DON M. Hard by the convent of the Carmelites,
In a sequestered garden's tranquil bound,
And safe from curious eyes, I left her, — hastening
To meet my brother: trembling there she counts
The slow-paced hours, nor deems how far triumphant
In queenly state, high on the throne of Fame
Messina shall behold my timid bride.
For next, encompassed by your knightly train,
With pomp of greatness in the festal show,
Her lover's form shall meet her wondering gaze!
Thus will I lead her to my mother; thus —
While countless thousands on her passage wait,
Amid the loud acclaim — the royal bride
Shall reach my palace gates!

Chorus. (CAJETAN) Command us, prince,
We live but to obey!

DON M. I tore myself
Reluctant from her arms; my every thought
Shall still be hers: so come along, my friends,
To where the turbaned merchant spreads his store
Of fabrics gold enwrought with curious art;
And all the gathered wealth of eastern climes.
First choose the well-formed sandals — meet to guard
And grace her delicate feet; then for her robe —
The tissue, pure as Etna's snow that lies
Nearest the sun — light as the wreathy mist
At summer dawn — so playful let it float
About her airy limbs. A girdle next,
Purple with gold embroidered o'er, to bind
With witching grace the tunic that confines
Her bosom's swelling charms: of silk the mantle,
Gorgeous with like empurpled hues, and fixed
With clasp of gold: — remember, too, the bracelets
To gird her beauteous arms; nor leave the treasure
Of ocean's pearly deeps and coral caves.
About her locks entwine a diadem
Of purest gems — the ruby's fiery glow

Commingling with the emerald's green. A veil,
From her tiara pendent to her feet,
Like a bright fleecy cloud shall circle round
Her slender form: and let a myrtle wreath
Crown the enchanting whole!

Chorus. (CAJETAN) We haste, my prince,
Amid the Bàzar's glittering rows, to cull
Each rich adornment.

DON M. From my stables lead
A palfrey, milk-white as the steeds that draw
The chariot of the sun; purple the housings,
The bridle sparkling o'er with precious gems,
For it shall bear my queen! Yourselves be ready
With trumpet's cheerful clang, in martial train
To lead your mistress home: let two attend me,
The rest await my quick return; and each
Guard well my secret purpose.

[*He goes away accompanied by two of the Chorus.*

Chorus (CAJETAN).

The princely strife is o'er, and say
What sport shall wing the slow-paced hours
And cheat the tedious day?
With hope and fear's enlivening zest
Disturb the slumber of the breast,
And wake life's dull untroubled sea
With freshening airs of gay variety.

One of the Chorus (MANFRED).

Lovely is Peace! A beauteous boy,
Couched listless by the rivulet's glassy tide
'Mid nature's tranquil scene,
He views the lambs that skip with innocent joy,
And crop the meadow's flowering pride:—
Then with his flute's enchanting sound,
He wakes the mountain echoes round,

Or slumbers in the sunset's ruddy sheen,
Lulled by the murmuring melody.
But War for me! my spirit's treasure,
Its stern delight, and wilder pleasure:
I love the peril and the pain,
And revel in the surge of Fortune's boisterous main!

A second (BERENGAR).

Is there not Love, and beauty's smile
That lures with soft resistless wile?
'Tis thrilling hope! 'tis rapturous fear,
'Tis heaven upon this mortal sphere;
When at her feet we bend the knee,
And own the glance of kindred ecstasy!
For ever on life's chequered way,
'Tis Love that tints the darkening hues of care
With soft benignant ray:
The mirthful daughter of the wave,
Celestial Venus ever fair,
Enchants our happy spring with fancy's gleam,
And wakes the airy forms of passion's golden dream.

First (MANFRED).

To the wild woods away!
Quick let us follow in the train
Of her chaste huntress of the silver bow:
And from the rocks amain
Track through the forest gloom the bounding roe,
The war-god's merry bride,
The chase recalls the battle's fray,
And kindle's victory's pride:—
Up with the streaks of early morn,
We scour with jocund hearts the misty vale,
Loud echoing to the cheerful horn—
Over mountain — over dale —
And every languid sense repair.
Bathed in the rushing streams of cold reviving air.

Second (BERENGAR).

Or shall we trust the ever-moving sea,
The azure goddess, blithe and free,
Whose face, the mirror of the cloudless sky,
Lures to her bosom wooingly?
Quick let us build on the dancing waves
A floating castle gay,
And merrily, merrily, swim away!
Who ploughs, with venturous keel, the brine
Of the ocean crystalline —
His bride is Fortune, the world his own,
For him a harvest blooms unsown: —
Here, like the wind that swift careers
The circling bound of earth and sky,
Flits ever changeful Destiny!
Of airy Chance 'tis the sportive reign,
And Hope ever broods on the boundless main!

A third (CAJETAN).

Nor on the watery waste alone
Of the tumultuous heaving sea: —
On the firm earth that sleeps secure,
Based on the pillars of eternity.
Say, when shall mortal joy endure?
New bodings in my anxious breast,
Waked by this sudden friendship, rise;
Ne'er would I choose my home of rest
On the stilled lava stream, that cold
Beneath the mountain lies: —
Not thus was Discord's flame controlled —
Too deep the rooted hate — too long
They brooded in their sullen hearts
O'er unforgotten treasured wrong.
In warning visions oft dismayed,
I read the signs of coming woe;
And now, from this mysterious maid,

My bosom tells the dreaded ills shall flow: —
Unblest, I deem, the bridal chain
Shall knit their secret loves, accurst
With holy cloisters' spoil profane.
No crooked paths to Virtue lead;
Ill fruit has ever sprung from evil seed!

BERENGAR.

And thus to sad unhallowed rites
Of an ill omened nuptial tie,
Too well ye know their father bore
A bride of mournful destiny,
Torn from his sire, whose awful curse has sped
Heaven's vengeance on the impious bed!
This fierce unnatural rage atones
A parent's crime — decreed by Fate,
Their mother's offspring, Strife and Hate!

The scene changes to a garden opening on the sea.

BEAT. (*steps forward from an alcove. She walks to and fro with an agitated air, looking around in every direction. Suddenly she stands still and listens*)
No! 'tis not he: 'twas but the playful wind
Rustling the pine tops. To his ocean bed
The sun declines, and with o'erwearied heart
I count the lagging hours: an icy chill
Creeps through my frame; the very solitude
And awful silence fright my trembling soul!
Where'er I turn, nought meets my gaze — he leaves me
Forsaken and alone! —
And like a rushing stream the city's hum
Floats on the breeze, and dull the mighty sea
Rolls murmuring to the rocks: I shrink to nothing,
With horrors compassed round; and like the leaf,

Borne on the autumn blast, am hurried onward
Thro' boundless space. —
Alas! that e'er I left
My peaceful cell — no cares, no fond desires
Disturbed my breast, unruffled as the stream
That glides in sunshine through the verdant mead; —
Nor poor in joys. Now — on the mighty surge
Of Fortune, tempest-tossed — the world enfolds me
With giant arms! Forgot my childhood's ties,
I listened to the lover's flattering tale —
Listened, and trusted! From the sacred dome
Allured — betrayed — for sure some hell-born magic
Enchained my frenzied sense — I fled with him,
The invader of Religion's dread abodes!

Where art thou, my beloved? Haste — return —
With thy dear presence calm my struggling soul!
[*She listens.*
Hark! the sweet voice! No! 'twas the echoing surge
That beats upon the shore; — alas! he comes not.
More faintly, o'er the distant waves, the sun
Gleams with expiring ray; a deathlike shudder
Creeps to my heart, and sadder, drearier grows
E'en desolation's self.
[*She walks to and fro, then listens again.*
Yes! from the thicket shade
A voice resounds! — 'tis he! — the loved one!
No fond illusion mocks my listening ear:
'Tis louder — nearer: to his arms I fly —
To his breast!
[*She rushes with outstretched arms to the extremity of the garden.* DON CÆSAR *meets her.*

DON CÆSAR. BEATRICE.

BEAT. (*starting back in horror*) What do I see?
[*At the same moment the Chorus comes forward.*

DON C. Angelic sweetness! fear not.
[*To the Chorus.*
Retire! your gleaming arms and rude array
Affright the timorous maid. [*To* BEATRICE.
Fear nothing! — beauty
And virgin shame are sacred in my eyes.
[*The Chorus steps aside. He approaches and takes her hand.*
Where hast thou been? for sure some envious power
Has hid thee from my gaze: long have I sought thee:
E'en from the hour when, 'mid the funeral rites
Of the dead prince, like some angelic vision,
Lit with celestial brightness, on my sight
Thou shon'st, no other image in my breast,
Waking or dreaming, lives; — nor to thyself
Unknown thy potent spells; my glance of fire,
My faltering accents, and my hand that lay
Trembling in thine, bespoke my ecstasy!
Aught else with solemn majesty the rite
And holy place forbade: —
The bell proclaimed
The awful Sacrifice! With downcast eyes,
And kneeling, I adored: — soon as I rose,
And caught with eager gaze thy form again,
Sudden it vanished; yet, with mighty magic
Of love enchained, my spirit tracked thy presence;
Nor ever, with unwearied quest, I cease,
At palace gates, amid the temple's throng,
In secret paths retired, or public scenes,
Where beauteous innocence perchance might rove,
To mark each passing form — in vain: but, guided
By some propitious deity, this day
One of my train, with happy vigilance,
Espied thee in the neighbouring church.
[BEATRICE, *who had stood trembling, with averted eyes, here makes a gesture of terror.*

I see thee
Once more; and may the spirit from this frame
Be severed e'er we part! Now let me snatch
This glad auspicious moment, and defy
Or chance, or envious demon's power, to shake
Henceforth my solid bliss; here I proclaim thee,
Before this listening warlike train, my bride,
With pledge of knightly honours!

[*He shows her to the Chorus.*

Who thou art,
I ask not: thou art mine! But that thy soul
And birth are pure alike, one glance informed
My inmost heart; and though thy lot were mean,
And poor thy lowly state, yet would I strain thee
With rapture to my arms: — no choice remains,
Thou art my love — my wife! Know too, that lifted
On fortune's height, I spurn control; my will
Can raise thee to the pinnacle of greatness —
Enough my name — I am Don Cæsar! None
Is nobler in Messina!

[BEATRICE *starts back in amazement. He remarks her agitation, and after a pause continues.*

What a grace
Lives in thy soft surprise and modest silence!
Yes! gentle humbleness is beauty's crown —
The Beautiful for ever hid, and shrinking
From its own lustre: but thy spirit needs
Repose, for aught of strange — e'en sudden joy —
Is terror-fraught. I leave thee —

[*Turning to the Chorus*

From this hour
She is your mistress, and my bride; so teach her,
With honours due, to entertain the pomp
Of queenly state. I will return with speed,
And lead her home as fits Messina's princess!

[*He goes away.*

BEATRICE *and the Chorus.*

Chorus (BOHEMUND).

Fair maiden — hail to thee,
Thou lovely queen!
Thine is the crown, and thine the victory!
Of heroes, to a distant age,
The blooming mother thou shalt shine,
Preserver of this kingly line.

(ROGER).

And thrice I bid thee hail,
Thou happy fair!
Sent in auspicious hour to bless
This favoured race — the gods' peculiar care.
Here twine the immortal wreaths of Fame,
And evermore, from sire to son,
Rolls on the sceptred sway,
To heirs of old renown, a race of deathless name!

(BOHEMUND).

The household gods exultingly
Thy coming wait;
The ancient, honoured sires,
That on the portals frown sedate,
Shall smile for thee!
There blooming Hebe shall thy steps attend;
And golden Victory, that sits
By Jove's eternal throne, with waving plumes
For conquest ever spread,
To welcome thee from heaven descend.

(ROGER).

Ne'er from this queenly bright array
The crown of beauty fades, —

Departing to the realms of day,
Each to the next, as good and fair,
Extends the zone of feminine grace,
And veil of purity: —
O happy race!
What vision glads my raptured eye!
Equal in nature's blooming pride,
I see the mother and the virgin bride.

BEATRICE (*awaking from her reverie*).

O luckless hour!
Alas! ill-fated maid!
Where shall I fly
From these rude warlike men?
Lost and betrayed!
A shudder o'er me came,
When of this race accurst — the brothers twain —
Their hands embrued with kindred gore,
I heard the dreaded name;
Oft told, their strife and serpent hate
With terror thrilled my bosom's core: —
And now — oh, hapless fate! —
I tremble, 'mid the rage of discord thrown,
Deserted and alone! [*She runs into the alcove.*

Chorus (BOHEMUND).

Son of the immortal deities,
And blest is he, the lord of power;
His every joy the world can give;
Of all that mortals prize
He culls the flower.

(ROGER).

For him from ocean's azure caves
The diver bears each pearl of purest ray;

Whate'er from nature's boundless field
Or toil or art has won,
Obsequious at his feet we lay;
His choice is ever free;
We bow to chance, and Fortune's blind decree.

(BOHEMUND).

But this of princes' lot I deem
The crowning treasure, joy supreme —
Of love the triumph and the prize,
The beauty, star of neighbouring eyes!
She blooms for him alone,
He calls the fairest maid his own.

(ROGER).

Armed for the deadly fray,
The corsair bounds upon the strand,
And drags, amid the gloom of night, away,
The shrieking captive train,
Of wild desires the hapless prey:
But ne'er his lawless hands profane
The gem — the peerless flower —
Whose charms shall deck the sultan's bower.

(BOHEMUND).

Now haste and watch, with curious eye,
These hallowed precincts round,
That no presumptuous foot come nigh
The secret, solitary ground:
Guard well the maiden fair,
Your chieftain's brightest jewel owns your care.
[*The Chorus withdraws to the background.*

The scene changes to a chamber in the interior of the palace.

DONNA ISABELLA *between* DON MANUEL *and* DON CÆSAR.

ISAB. The long-expected festal day is come,
My children's hearts are twined in one, as thus
I fold their hands. Oh, blissful hour! when first
A mother dares to speak in nature's voice,
And no rude presence checks the tide of love.
The clang of arms affrights mine ear no more: —
And as the owls, ill-omened brood of night,
From some old shattered homestead's ruined walls,
Their ancient reign, fly forth a dusky swarm,
Darkening the cheerful day; — when absent long,
The dwellers home return with joyous shouts,
To build the pile anew; — so Hate departs
With all his grisly train — pale Envy, scowling Malice,
And hollow-eyed Suspicion — from our gates,
Hoarse murmuring, to the realms of night; while Peace,
By Concord and fair Friendship led along,
Comes smiling in his place. [*She pauses.*
But not alone
This day of joy to each restores a brother;
It brings a sister! Wonderstruck you gaze!
Yet now the truth, in silence guarded long,
Bursts from my soul — attend! I have a daughter!
A sister lives, ordained by Heaven to bind ye
With ties unknown before.
DON C. We have a sister!
What hast thou said, my mother? — never told
Her being till this hour!
DON M. In childhood's years,
Oft of a sister we have heard, untimely
Snatched in her cradle by remorseless death;
So ran the tale.
ISAB. She lives!
DON C. And thou wert silent!
ISAB. Hear how the seed was sown in early time,

That now shall ripen to a joyful harvest.
Ye bloomed in boyhood's tender age — e'en then —
By mutual deadly hate, the bitter spring
Of grief to this torn anxious heart — dissevered;
Oh, may your strife return no more! A vision,
Strange and mysterious, in your father's breast
Woke dire presage: it seemed that from his couch,
With branches intertwined, two laurels grew,
And in the midst a lily all in flames,
That, catching swift the boughs and knotted stems,
Burst forth with crackling rage, and o'er the house
Spread in one mighty sea of fire: perplexed
By this terrific dream, my husband sought
An Arab, skilled to read the stars, and long
The trusted oracle, whose counsels swayed
His inmost purpose: thus the boding sage
Spoke Fate's decrees; — if I a daughter bore,
Destruction to his sons and all his race
From her should spring. Soon, by Heaven's will, this child
Of dreadful omen saw the light — your sire
Commanded instant in the waves to throw
The new-born innocent; a mother's love
Prevailed, and, aided by a faithful servant,
I snatched the babe from death.

DON C. Blest be the hands,
The ministers of thy care! O, ever rich
Of counsels was a parent's love!

ISAB. But more
Than Nature's mighty voice — a warning dream
Impelled to save my child: while yet unborn
She slumbered in my womb, sleeping I saw
An infant, fair as of celestial kind,
That played upon the grass; soon from the wood
A lion rushed, and from his gory jaws,
Caressing, in the infant's lap let fall
His prey, new-caught: then thro' the air down swept

An eagle, and with fond caress alike
Dropt from his claws a trembling kid; and both
Cowered at the infant's feet, a gentle pair.
A monk, the saintly guide whose counsels poured,
In every earthly need, the balm of Heaven
Upon my troubled soul, my dream resolved: —
Thus spoke the man of God: — a daughter, sent
To knit the warring spirits of my sons
In bonds of tender love, should recompense
A mother's pains! Deep in my heart I treasured
His words, and, reckless of the pagan seer,
Preserved the blessed child — ordained of Heaven
To still your growing strife; sweet pledge of hope
And messenger of peace!

DON M. (*embracing his brother*) There needs no sister
To join our hearts — she shall but bind them closer.

ISAB. In a lone spot obscure, by stranger hands
Nurtured, the secret flower has grown — to me
Denied the joy to mark each infant charm
And opening grace from that sad hour of parting; —
These arms ne'er clasp'd my child again! — her sire,
To jealousy's corroding fears a prey,
And brooding dark suspicion, restless tracked
Each day my steps.

DON C. Yet three months flown, my father
Sleeps in the tranquil grave; say, whence delayed
The joyous tidings? — Why so long concealed
The maid, nor earlier taught our hearts to glow
With brother's love?

ISAB. The cause — your frenzied hate.
That raging unconfined, e'en on the tomb
Of your scarce buried father, lit the flames
Of mortal strife. What! could I throw my daughter
Betwixt your gleaming blades? Or 'mid the storm
Of passion would ye list a woman's counsels?
Could she, sweet pledge of peace, of all our hopes

The last and holy anchor, 'mid the rage
Of discord find a home? Ye stand as brothers.
So will I give a sister to your arms!
The reconciling angel comes — each hour
I wait my messenger's return; he leads her
From her sequestered cell, to glad once more
A mother's eyes.

DON M. Nor her alone this day
Thy arms shall fold: — joy pours thro' all our gates;
Soon shall the desolate halls be full, the seat
Of every blooming Grace. — Now hear my secret:
A sister thou hast given; to thee I bring
A daughter — bless thy son! My heart has found
Its lasting shrine: ere this day's sun has set,
Don Manuel to thy feet shall lead his bride.
The partner of his days.

ISAB. And to my breast
With transport will I clasp the chosen maid,
That makes my first-born happy! Joy shall spring
Where'er she treads, and every flower that blooms
Around the path of life smile in her presence!
May bliss reward the son, that for my brows
Has twined the choicest wreath a mother wears.

DON C. Yet give not all the fulness of thy blessing
To him, thy eldest born. If love be blest,
I, too, can give thee joy — I bring a daughter —
Another flower for thy most treasured garland!
The maid that in this ice-cold bosom first
Awoke the rapturous flame! Ere yonder sun
Declines — Don Cæsar's bride shall call thee mother!

DON M. Almighty Love! — thou godlike power — for well
We call thee sovereign of the breast! Thy sway
Controls each warring element, and tunes
To soft accord; nought lives but owns thy greatness!
Lo! the rude soul that long defied thee, melts
At thy command! [*He embraces* DON CÆSAR.

Now I can trust thy heart,
And joyful strain thee to a brother's arms!
I doubt thy faith no more, for thou canst love!
ISAB. Thrice blest the day, when every gloomy care
From my o'erlaboured breast has flown. I see
On steadfast columns reared our kingly race,
And with contented spirit track the stream
Of measureless time. In these deserted halls,
Sad in my widow's veil, but yesterday
Childless I roamed — and soon, in youthful charms
Arrayed, three blooming daughters at my side
Shall stand! O happiest mother! Chief of women,
In bliss supreme; can aught of earthly joy
O'erbalance thine?
But say, of royal stem,
What maidens grace our isle? For ne'er my sons
Would stoop to meaner brides.
DON M. Seek not to raise
The veil that hides my bliss; another day
Shall tell thee all. Enough — Don Manuel's bride
Is worthy of thy son and thee.
ISAB. Thy sire
Speaks in thy words; thus to himself retired,
For ever would he brood o'er counsels dark,
And cloak his secret purpose; — your delay
Be short, my son. [*Turning to* DON CÆSAR.
But thou — some royal maid,
Daughter of kings, has stirred thy soul to love;
So speak — her name —
DON C. I have no art to veil
My thoughts with mystery's garb — my spirit free
And open as my brows; what thou wouldst know
Concerned me never. What illumes above
Heaven's flaming orb? Himself! — On all the world
He shines, and with his beaming glory tells
From light he sprung: — in her pure eyes I gazed,
I looked into her heart of hearts: — the brightness

Revealed the pearl. Her race — her name — my mother,
Ask not of me!
ISAB. My son, explain thy words,
For, like some voice divine, the sudden charm
Has thralled thy soul: to deeds of rash emprise
Thy nature prompted, not to fantasies
Of boyish love: — tell me, what swayed thy choice?
DON C. My choice? my mother! Is it choice when man
Obeys the might of destiny, that brings
The awful hour? I sought no beauteous bride,
No fond delusion stirred my tranquil breast,
Still as the house of death; for there, unsought,
I found the treasure of my soul. Thou know'st
That, heedless ever of the giddy race,
I looked on beauty's charms with cold disdain,
Nor deemed of womankind there lived another
Like thee — whom my idolatrous fancy decked
With heavenly graces: —
'Twas the solemn rite
Of my dead father's obsequies; we stood
Amid the countless throng, with strange attire
Hid from each other's glance; for thus ordained
Thy thoughtful care, lest with outbursting rage,
E'en by the holy place unawed, our strife
Should mar the funeral pomp.
With sable gauze
The nave was all o'erhung; the altar round
Stood twenty giant saints, uplifting each
A torch; and in the midst reposed on high
The coffin, with o'erspreading pall, that showed,
In white, redemption's sign; — thereon were laid
The staff of sovereignty, the princely crown,
The golden spurs of knighthood, and the sword,
With diamond-studded belt: —
And all was hushed

In silent prayer, when from the lofty choir,
Unseen, the pealing organ spoke, and loud
From hundred voices burst the choral strain!
Then, 'mid the tide of song, the coffin sank
With the descending floor beneath, for ever
Down to the world below: — but, wide outspread
Above the yawning grave, the pall upheld
The gauds of earthly state, nor with the corse
To darkness fell; yet on the seraph wings
Of Harmony, the enfranchised spirit soared
To heaven and mercy's throne:
Thus to thy thought,
My mother, I have waked the scene anew,
And say if aught of passion in my breast
Profaned the solemn hour; yet then the beams
Of mighty love — so willed my guiding star —
First lit my soul; but how it chanced, myself
I ask in vain.

ISAB. I would hear all; so end
Thy tale.

DON C. What brought her to my side, or whence
She came, I know not: — from her presence quick
Some secret all-prevading inward charm
Awoke; 'twas not the magic of a smile,
Nor playful Cupid in her cheeks, nor more,
The form of peerless grace; — 'twas Beauty's soul,
The speaking virtue, modesty inborn,
That as with magic spells, impalpable
To sense, my being thralled. We breathed together
The air of heaven: — enough! — no utterance asked
Of words, our spiritual converse; — in my heart,
Tho' strange, yet with familiar ties inwrought
She seemed, and instant spake the thought — 'tis she!
Or none that lives!

DON M. (*interposing with eagerness*) That is the
sacred fire
From heaven! the spark of love — that on the soul

Bursts like the lightning's flash, and mounts in flame,
When kindred bosoms meet! No choice remains —
Who shall resist? What mortal break the band
That Heaven has knit? — Brother, my blissful fortune
Was echoed in thy tale — well thou hast raised
The veil that shadows yet my secret love.

ISAB. Thus destiny has marked the wayward course
Of my two sons: the mighty torrent sweeps
Down from the precipice; with rage he wears
His proper bed, nor heeds the channel traced
By art and prudent care. So to the powers,
That darkly sway the fortunes of our house,
Trembling I yield. One pledge of hope remains;
Great as their birth — their noble souls.

ISABELLA, DON MANUEL, DON CÆSAR.

DIEGO *is seen at the door.*

ISAB. But see,
My faithful messenger returns. Come near me,
Honest Diego. Quick! Where is she? Tell me,
Where is my child? There is no secret here.
Oh, speak! No longer from my eyes conceal her;
Come! we are ready for the height of joy.
[*She is about to lead him toward the door.*
What means this pause? Thou lingerest — thou art dumb —
Thy looks are terror-fraught — a shudder creeps
Through all my frame — declare thy tidings! — speak!
Where is she? Where is Beatrice?
[*She is about to rush from the chamber.*

DON M. (*to himself abstractedly*) Beatrice!

DIEGO. (*holding back the* PRINCESS) Be still!

ISAB. Where is she? Anguish tears my breast!

DIEGO. She comes not;
I bring no daughter to thy arms.

ISAB. Declare
Thy message! Speak! by all the Saints!
What has befallen?
DON M. Where is my sister? Tell us,
Thou harbinger of ill!
DIEGO. The maid is stolen
By corsairs! lost! Oh! that I ne'er had seen
This day of woe!
DON M. Compose thyself, my mother!
DON C. Be calm! list all his tale.
DIEGO. At thy command
I sought in haste the well-known path that leads
To the old sanctuary — Joy winged my footsteps;
The journey was my last!
DON C. Be brief!
DON M. Proceed!
DIEGO. Soon as I trode the convent's court — impatient —
I ask — "Where is thy daughter?" Terror sate
In every eye; and straight, with horror mute,
I hear the worst.

[ISABELLA *sinks, pale and trembling, upon a chair;* DON MANUEL *is busied about her.*

DON C. Say'st thou by pirates stolen?
Who saw the band? — what tongue relates the spoil?
DIEGO. Not far a Moorish galley was descried,
At anchor in the bay —
DON C. The refuge oft
From tempest's rage; where is the bark?
DIEGO. At dawn
With favouring breeze she stood to sea.
DON C. But never
One prey contents the Moor; say, have they told
Of other spoil?
DIEGO. A herd that pastured near
Was dragged away.

DON C. Yet from the convent's bound
How tear the maid unseen?
DIEGO. 'Tis thought, with ladders,
They scaled the wall.
DON C. Thou know'st what jealous care
Enshrines the bride of Heaven; scarce could their steps
Invade the secret cells.
DIEGO. Bound by no vows,
The maiden roved at will; oft would she seek,
Alone, the garden's shade. Alas! this day,
Ne'er to return.
DON C. Said'st thou — the prize of corsairs? —
Perchance, at other bidding, she forsook
The sheltering dome —
ISAB. (*rising suddenly*) 'Twas force! 'twas savage spoil!
Ne'er has my child, reckless of honour's ties,
With vile seducer fled! My sons! Awake!
I thought to give a sister to your arms;
I ask a daughter from your swords! Arise!
Avenge this wrong! To arms! Launch every ship!
Scour all our coasts! From sea to sea pursue them!
O bring my daughter — haste!
DON C. Farewell — I fly
To vengeance! [*He goes away.*

[DON MANUEL *arouses himself from a state of abstraction, and turns, with an air of agitation, to* DIEGO.

DON M. Speak! within the convent's walls
When first unseen —
DIEGO. This day at dawn.
DON M. (*to* ISABELLA) Her name,
Thou say'st, is Beatrice?
ISAB. No questions! Fly!
DON M. Yet tell me —
ISAB. Haste! Begone! Why this delay? —
Follow thy brother.

DON M. I conjure thee — speak —
ISAB. (*dragging him away*) Behold my tears!
DON M. Where was she hid? What region
Concealed my sister?
ISAB. Scarce from curious eyes,
In the deep bosom of the earth more safe
My child had been!
DIEGO. Oh! now a sudden horror
Starts in my breast.
DON M. What gives thee fear?
DIEGO. 'Twas I
That guiltless caused this woe!
ISAB. Unhappy man!
What hast thou done?
DIEGO. To spare thy mother's heart
One anxious pang, my mistress, I concealed
What now my lips shall tell: — 'Twas on the day
When thy dead husband in the silent tomb
Was laid; from every side the unnumbered throng
Pressed eager to the solemn rites; thy daughter —
For e'en amid the cloistered shade was noised
The funeral pomp — urged me, with ceaseless prayers,
To lead her to the festival of Death.
In evil hour I gave consent; and, shrouded
In sable weeds of mourning, she surveyed
Her father's obsequies. With keen reproach
My bosom tells — (for through the veil her charms
Resistless shone) — 'twas there, perchance, the spoiler
Lurked to betray.
DON M. (*to himself*) Thrice happy words! I live!
It was another!
ISAB. (*to* DIEGO) Faithless! Ill betide
Thy treacherous age!
DIEGO. Oh, never have I strayed
From duty's path! My mistress, in her prayers
I heard the voice of Nature; — thus from Heaven
Ordained, methought, the secret impulse moves

Of kindred blood, to hallow with her tears
A father's grave: the tender office owned
Thy servant's care, and thus with good intent
I wrought but ill.
DON M. (*to himself*) Why stand I thus, a prey
To torturing fears! No longer will I bear
The dread suspense — I will know all!
DON C. (*who returns*) Forgive me,
I follow thee.
DON M. Away! Let no man follow! [*Exit.*
DON C. (*looking after him in surprise*) What means
my brother? Speak —
ISAB. In wonder lost
I gaze; some mystery lurks —
DON C. Thou mark'st, my mother,
My quick return: with eager zeal I flew
At thy command, nor asked one trace to guide
My footsteps to thy daughter. Whence was torn
Thy treasure? Say, what cloistered solitude
Enshrined the beauteous maid?
ISAB. 'Tis consecrate
To St. Cecilia; deep in forest shades,
Beyond the woody ridge that slowly climbs
Toward Etna's towering throne, it seems a refuge
Of parted souls!
DON C. Have courage, trust thy sons;
She shall be thine, tho' with unwearied quest
O'er every land and sea I track her presence
To earth's extremest bounds: one thought alone
Disturbs, — in stranger hands my timorous bride
Waits my return; to thy protecting arms
I give the pledge of all my joy! She comes;
Soon on her faithful bosom thou shalt rest,
In sweet oblivion of thy cares. [*Exit.*
ISAB. When will the ancient curse be stilled, that
weighs
Upon our house? Some mocking demon sports

With every new-formed hope, nor envious leaves
One hour of joy. So near the haven smiled —
So smooth the treacherous main — secure I deemed
My happiness: the storm was lulled; and bright
In evening's lustre gleamed the sunny shore:
Then thro' the placid air the tempest sweeps,
And bears me to the roaring surge again!

[*She goes into the interior of the palace, followed by* DIEGO.

The Scene changes to the Garden.

Both Choruses, afterward BEATRICE.

The Chorus of DON MANUEL *enters in solemn procession, adorned with garlands, and bearing the bridal ornaments above mentioned. The Chorus of* DON CÆSAR *opposes their entrance.*

First Chorus. (CAJETAN) Begone!
Second Chorus. (BOHEMUND) Not at thy bidding!
CAJET. Seest thou not
Thy presence irks?
BOHEM. Thou hast it, then, the longer!
CAJET. My place is here! What arm repels me?
BOHEM. Mine!
CAJET. Don Manuel sent me hither.
BOHEM. I obey
My lord, Don Cæsar.
CAJET. To the eldest born
Thy master reverence owes.
BOHEM. The world belongs
To him that wins!
CAJET. Unmannered knave, give place!
BOHEM. Our swords be measured first!
CAJET. I find thee ever
A serpent in my path.

BOHEM. Where'er I list,
Thus will I meet thee!
CAJET. Say, why cam'st thou hither
To sp—
BOHEM. And thou to question and command?
CAJET. To parley I disdain!
BOHEM. Too much I grace thee
By words!
CAJET. Thy hot impetuous youth should bow
To reverend age.
BOHEM. Elder thou art — not braver.
BEAT. (*rushing from her place of concealment*) Alas!
What mean these warlike men?
CAJET. (*to* BOHEMUND) I heed not
Thy threats and lofty mien.
BOHEM. I serve a master
Better than thine.
BEAT. Alas! Should he appear!
CAJET. Thou liest! Don Manuel thousandfold excels.
BOHEM. In every strife the wreath of victory decks
Don Cæsar's brows!
BEAT. Now he will come! Already
The hour is past!
CAJET. 'Tis peace, or thou shouldst know
My vengeance!
BOHEM. Fear, not peace, thy arm refrains.
BEAT. Oh! Were he thousand miles remote!
CAJET. Thy looks
But move my scorn; the compact I obey.
BOHEM. The coward's ready shield!
CAJET. Come on! I follow.
BOHEM. To arms!
BEAT. (*in the greatest agitation*) Their falchions gleam — the strife begins!
Ye heavenly powers, his steps refrain! Some snare
Throw round his feet, that in this hour of dread

He come not: all ye angels, late implored
To give him to my arms, reverse my prayers;
Far, far from hence convey the loved one!

[*She runs into the alcove. At the moment when the two Choruses are about to engage,* DON MANUEL *appears.*

DON MANUEL, *the Chorus.*

DON M. Hold!
What do I see!

First Chorus to the Second. (CAJETAN, BERENGAR, MANFRED)
Come on! Come on!

Second Chorus. (BOHEMUND, ROGER, HIPPOLYTE)
Down with them!

DON M. (*stepping between them with drawn sword*)
Hold!

CAJET. 'Tis the prince!

BOHEM. Be still!

DON M. I stretch him dead
Upon this verdant turf, that with one glance
Of scorn prolongs the strife, or threats his foe!
Why rage ye thus? What maddening fiend impels
To blow the flames of ancient hate anew,
For ever reconciled? Say, who began
The conflict? — Speak —

First Chorus. (CAJETAN, BERENGAR)
My prince, we stood —

Second Chorus. (ROGER, BOHEMUND) *interrupting them.*
They came —

DON M. (*to the First Chorus*) Speak thou!

First Chorus. (CAJETAN) With wreaths adorned, in festal train,
We bore the bridal gifts; no thought of ill
Disturbed our peaceful way; composed for ever
With holy pledge of love we deemed your strife,

And trusting came; when here in rude array
Of arms encamped they stood, and loud defied us!
DON M. Slave! Is no refuge safe? Shall discord thus
Profane the bower of virgin innocence,
The home of sanctity and peace?
[*To the Second Chorus.*
Retire —
Your warlike presence ill beseems; away!
I would be private. [*They hesitate.*
In your master's name
I give command; our souls are one, our lips
Declare each other's thoughts; begone!
[*To the First Chorus.*
Remain —
And guard the entrance.
BOHEM. So! What next? Our masters
Are reconciled; that's plain; and less he wins
Of thanks than peril, that with busy zeal
In princely quarrel stirs; for when of strife
His Mightiness aweary feels, of guilt
He throws the red-dyed mantle unconcerned
On his poor follower's luckless head, and stands
Arrayed in virtue's robes! So let them end
E'en as they will their brawls, I hold it best
That we obey.
[*Exit Second Chorus. The First withdraws to the back of the Stage; at the same moment* BEATRICE *rushes forward, and throws herself into* DON MANUEL'S *arms.*
BEAT. 'Tis thou! Ah! cruel one,
Again I see thee — clasp thee — long appalled,
To thousand ills a prey, trembling I languish
For thy return: no more — in thy loved arms
I am at peace, nor think of dangers past,
Thy breast my shield from every threatening harm.
Quick! Let us fly! They see us not — away!

Nor lose the moment.
Ha! Thy looks affright me!
Thy sullen cold reserve! Thou tear'st thyself
Impatient from my circling arms, I know thee
No more! Is this Don Manuel? My beloved?
My husband?
DON M. Beatrice!
BEAT. No words! The moment
Is precious! Haste.
DON M. Yet tell me —
BEAT. Quick! Away
Ere those fierce men return.
DON M. Be calm, for nought
Shall trouble thee of ill.
BEAT. Oh fly! — alas,
Thou know'st them not!
DON M. Protected by this arm
Canst thou fear aught?
BEAT. Oh! trust me; mighty men
Are here.
DON M. Beloved! mightier none than I!
BEAT. And wouldst thou brave this warlike host alone?
DON M. Alone! the men thou fear'st —
BEAT. Thou know'st them not,
Nor whom they serve.
DON M. Myself! I am their lord!
BEAT. Thou art — a shudder creeps thro' all my frame!
DON M. Far other than I seemed; so learn at last
To know me, Beatrice. Not the poor knight
Am I, the stranger and unknown, that loving
Taught thee to love; but what I am — my race —
My power —
BEAT. And art thou not Don Manuel? Speak —
Who art thou?

DON M. Chief of all that bear the name,
I am Don Manuel, Prince of Messina!
BEAT. Art thou Don Manuel, Don Cæsar's brother?
DON M. Don Cæsar is my brother.
BEAT. Is thy brother!
DON M. What means this terror? Know'st thou, then, Don Cæsar?
None other of my race?
BEAT. Art thou Don Manuel,
That with thy brother liv'st in bitter strife
Of long inveterate hate?
DON M. This very sun
Smiled on our glad accord! Yes, we are brothers!
Brothers in heart!
BEAT. And reconciled? This day?
DON M. What stirs this wild disorder? Hast thou known
Aught but our name? Say, hast thou told me all?
Is there no secret? Hast thou nought concealed?
Nothing disguised?
BEAT. Thy words are dark; explain,
What shall I tell thee?
DON M. Of thy mother nought
Hast thou e'er told; who is she? If in words
I paint her, bring her to thy sight —
BEAT. Thou know'st her!
And thou wert silent!
DON M. If I know thy mother,
Horrors betide us both!
BEAT. Oh! she is gracious
As the sun's orient beam! Yes! I behold her;
Fond memory wakes; — and from my bosom's depths
Her godlike presence rises to my view!
I see around her snowy neck descend
The tresses of her raven hair, that shade
The form of sculptured loveliness; I see
The pale, high-thoughted brow; the darkening glance

Of her large lustrous orbs; I hear the tones
Of soul-fraught sweetness!
DON M. 'Tis herself!
BEAT. This day,
Perchance had given me to her arms, and knit
Our souls in everlasting love; — such bliss
I have renounced, yes! I have lost a mother
For thee!
DON M. Console thyself, Messina's princess
Henceforth shall call thee daughter; to her feet
I lead thee; come — she waits.
BEAT. What hast thou said?
Thy mother and Don Cæsar's? Never! never!
DON M. Thou shudderest! Whence this horror?
Hast thou known
My mother? Speak —
BEAT. O grief! O dire misfortune!
Alas! that e'er I live to see this day!
DON M. What troubles thee? Thou know'st me,
thou hast found,
In the poor stranger knight, Messina's prince.
BEAT. Give me the dear unknown again! With him,
On earth's remotest wilds I could be blest!
DON C. (*behind the scene*) Away! What rabble
throng is here?
BEAT. That voice!
Oh heavens! Where shall I fly!
DON M. Know'st thou that voice?
No! thou hast never heard it; to thine ear
'Tis strange —
BEAT. Oh, come — delay not —
DON M. Wherefore fly?
It is my brother's voice! He seeks me — how
He tracked my steps —
BEAT. By all the holy saints!
Brave not his wrath! oh quit this place — avoid him —
Meet not thy brother here!

DON M. My soul! thy fears
Confound; thou hear'st me not; our strife is o'er
Yes! we are reconciled.
BEAT. Protect me, Heaven,
In this dread hour.
DON M. A sudden dire presage
Starts in my breast — I shudder at the thought:
If it be true! Oh horror! Could she know
That voice! Wert thou — my tongue denies to utter
The words of fearful import — Beatrice!
Say, wert thou present at the funeral rites
Of my dead sire?
BEAT. Alas!
DON M. Thou wert!
BEAT. Forgive me!
DON M. Unhappy woman! —
BEAT. I was present!
DON M. Horror!
BEAT. Some mighty impulse urged me to the scene —
Oh be not angry — to thyself I owned
The ardent fond desire; with darkening brow
Thou listenedst to my prayer, and I was silent.
But what misguiding inauspicious star
Allured, I know not; from my inmost soul
The wish, the dear emotion spoke; and vain
Aught else: — Diego gave consent — oh, pardon me!
I disobeyed thee.

[*She advances toward him imploringly; at the same moment* DON CÆSAR *enters, accompanied by the whole Chorus.*

BOTH BROTHERS, BOTH CHORUSES, BEATRICE.

Second Chorus (BOHEMUND) *to* DON CÆSAR.
Thou believ'st us not —
Believe thine eyes!

DON C. *(rushes forward furiously, and at the sight of his brother starts back with horror).*
Some hell-born magic cheats
My senses; in her arms! Envenomed snake!
Is this thy love? For this thy treacherous heart
Could lure with guise of friendship! O from heaven
Breathed my immortal hate! Down, down to hell,
Thou soul of falsehood!
[He stabs him, DON MANUEL *falls.*
DON M. Beatrice! — my brother! —
I die! *[Dies.* BEATRICE *sinks lifeless at his side.*
First Chorus. (CAJETAN)
Help! Help! To arms! Avenge with blood
The bloody deed!
Second Chorus. (BOHEMUND) The fortune of the day
Is ours! The strife for ever stilled: — Messina
Obeys one lord.
First Chorus. (CAJETAN, BERENGAR, MANFRED)
Revenge! The murderer
Shall die! Quick offer to your master's shade
Appeasing sacrifice!
Second Chorus. (BOHEMUND, ROGER, HIPPOLYTE)
My prince! fear nothing,
Thy friends are true.
DON C. *(steps between them, looking around)* Be still! The foe is slain
That practised on my trusting honest heart
With snares of brother's love! O direful shows
The deed of death! But righteous Heaven hath judged.
First Chorus. (CAJETAN) Alas to thee, Messina!
Woe for ever!
Sad city! From thy blood-stained walls this deed
Of nameless horror taints the skies: ill fare
Thy mothers and thy children, youth and age,
And offspring yet unborn!
DON C. Too late your grief —
Here give your help. *[Pointing to* BEATRICE.

Call her to life, and quick
Depart this scene of terror and of death.
I must away and seek my sister: — Hence!
Conduct her to my mother —
And tell her that her son, Don Cæsar, sends her!
[*Exit.*

[*The senseless* BEATRICE *is placed on a litter and carried away by the Second Chorus. The First Chorus remains with the body, around which the boys who bear the bridal presents range themselves in a semicircle.*

Chorus (CAJETAN).

List, how with dreaded mystery
Was signed to my prophetic soul,
Of kindred blood the dire decree: —
Hither with noiseless giant stride
I saw the hideous Fiend of terror glide!
'Tis past! — I strive not to control
My shuddering awe — so swift of ill
The Fates the warning sign fulfil.
Lo! to my sense dismayed,
Sudden the deed of death has shown
Whate'er my boding fears portrayed:
The visioned thought was pain;
The present horror curdles every vein!

One of the Chorus (MANFRED).

Sound, sound the plaint of woe!
Beautiful Youth!
Outstretched and pale he lies,
Untimely cropped in early bloom;
The heavy night of death has sealed his eyes; —
In this glad hour of nuptial joy,
Snatched by relentless doom,

He sleeps — while, echoing to the sky,
Of sorrow bursts the loud despairing cry!

A second (CAJETAN).

We come, we come, in festal pride,
To greet the beauteous bride;
Behold! the nuptial gifts, the rich attire:
The banquet waits, the guests are there;
They bid thee to the solemn rite
Of Hymen quick repair.
Thou hear'st them not — the sportive lyre,
The frolic dance, shall ne'er invite;
Nor wake thee from thy lowly bed,
For deep the slumber of the dead!

The whole Chorus.

No more the echoing horn shall cheer,
Nor bride with tones of sweetness charm his ear,
On the cold earth he lies,
In death's eternal slumber closed his eyes.

A third (CAJETAN).

What are the hopes, and fond desires
Of mortals' transitory race?
This day, with harmony of voice and soul,
Ye woke the long-extinguished fires
Of brothers' love — yon flaming orb
Lit with his earliest beams your dear embrace:
At eve, upon the gory sand
Thou liest — a reeking corse!
Stretched by a brother's murderous hand.
Vain projects, treacherous hopes,
Child of the fleeting hour, are thine;
Fond man! thou rear'st on dust each bold design.

Chorus (BERENGAR).

To thy mother I will bear
The burden of unutterable woe!
Quick shall yon cypress, blooming fair,
Bend to the axe's murderous blow.
Then twine the mournful bier!
For ne'er with verdant life the tree shall smile
That grew on death's devoted soil;
Ne'er in the breeze the branches play,
Nor shade the wanderer in the noontide ray;
'Twas marked to bear the fruits of doom,
Cursed to the service of the tomb.

First (CAJETAN).

Woe to the murderer! Woe!
That sped exulting in his pride.
Behold! the parched earth drinks the crimson tide.
Down, down it flows, unceasingly,
To the dim caverned halls below,
Where throned in kindred gloom the sister train,
Of Themis progeny severe,
Brood in their songless silent reign!
Stern ministers of Wrath's decree,
They catch in swarthy cups thy streaming gore,
And pledge with horrid rites for vengeance evermore!

Second (BERENGAR).

Tho' swift of deeds the traces fade
From earth, before the enlivening ray;
As o'er the brow the transient shade
Of thought, the hues of fancy flit away:—
Yet in the mystic womb unseen,
Of the dark ruling Hours that sway
Our mortal lot, whate'er *has been*,
With new creative germ defies decay.
The blooming field is time,

For Nature's ever-teeming shoot,
And all is seed, and all is fruit.

[*The Chorus goes away, bearing the corpse of* DON MANUEL *on a bier.*

SCENE. — *The Hall of Pillars. It is night.*

The stage is lighted from above by a single large lamp.

DONNA ISABELLA *and* DIEGO *advance to the front.*

ISAB. As yet no joyful tidings, not a trace
Found of the lost one!
DIEGO. Nothing have we heard,
My mistress; yet o'er every track, unwearied,
Thy sons pursue. Ere long the rescued maid
Shall smile at dangers past.
ISAB. Alas! Diego,
My heart is sad; 'twas I that caused this woe!
DIEGO. Vex not thy anxious bosom; nought escaped
Thy thoughtful care.
ISAB. Oh! had I earlier shown
The hidden treasure!
DIEGO. Prudent were thy counsels,
Wisely thou left'st her in retirement's shade;
So, trust in Heaven.
ISAB. Alas! no joy is perfect —
Without this chance of ill my bliss were pure.
DIEGO. Thy happiness is but delayed; enjoy
The concord of thy sons.
ISAB. The sight was rapture
Supreme — when, locked in one another's arms,
They glowed with brothers' love.
DIEGO. And in the heart
It burns; for ne'er their princely souls have stooped
To mean disguise.
ISAB. Now, too, their bosoms wake

To gentler thoughts, and own the softening sway
Of love. No more their hot impetuous youth
Revels in liberty untamed, and spurns
Restraint of Law — attempered passion's self,
With modest chaste reserve.
To thee, Diego,
I will unfold my secret heart; this hour
Of feeling's opening bloom, expected long,
Wakes boding fears: thou know'st to sudden rage
Love stirs tumultuous breasts; — and if this flame
With jealousy should rouse the slumbering fires
Of ancient hate — I shudder at the thought!
If these discordant souls perchance have thrilled
In fatal unison! — Enough — the clouds,
That black with thundering menace o'er me hung,
Are past; some angel sped them tranquil by,
And my enfranchised spirit breathes again!

DIEGO. Rejoice, my mistress; for thy gentle sense,
And soft prevailing art, more weal have wrought
Than all thy husband's power. Be praise to thee
And thy auspicious star!

ISAB. Yes! fortune smiled;
Nor light the task, so long with apt disguise
To veil the cherished secret of my heart,
And cheat my ever-jealous lord: more hard
To stifle mighty nature's pleading voice,
That, like a prisoned fire, for ever strove
To rend its confines.

DIEGO. All shall yet be well;
Fortune, propitious to our hopes, gave pledge
Of bliss that time will show.

ISAB. I praise not yet
My natal star, while darkening o'er my fate
This mystery hangs: too well the dire mischance
Tells of the Fiend whose never slumbering rage
Pursues our house. Now list what I have done,
And praise or blame me as thou wilt; from thee

My bosom guards no secret: — ill I brook
This dull repose, while swift o'er land and sea
My sons unwearied track their sister's flight,
Yes! I have sought — Heaven counsels oft, when vain
All mortal aid.

DIEGO. What I may know, my mistress,
Declare.

ISAB. On Etna's solitary height
A reverend hermit dwells; — benamed of old,
The Mountain Seer; — who to the realms of light
More near abiding than the toilsome race
Of mortals here below, with purer air
Has cleansed each earthly grosser sense away;
And from the lofty peak of gathered years,
As from his mountain home, with downward glance
Surveys the crooked paths of worldly strife.
To him are known the fortunes of our house;
Oft has the holy sage besought response
From Heaven, and many a curse with earnest prayer
Averted: thither at my bidding flew,
On wings of youthful haste, a messenger,
To ask some tidings of my child: each hour
I wait his homeward footsteps.

DIEGO. If mine eyes
Deceive me not, he comes; and well his speed
Has earned thy praise.

MESSENGER, ISABELLA, DIEGO.

ISAB. (*to* MESSENGER) Now speak, and nothing hide
Of weal or woe: be Truth upon thy lips!
What tidings bear'st thou from the Mountain Seer?

MESS. His answer, "Quick, retrace thy steps — the lost one
Is found."

ISAB. Auspicious tongue! Celestial sounds
Of peace and joy! thus ever to my vows,

Thrice honoured sage, thy kindly message spoke!
But say, which heaven-directed brother traced
My daughter?

MESS. 'Twas thy eldest born that found
The deep-secluded maid.

ISAB. Is it Don Manuel
That gives her to my arms? Oh, he was ever
The child of blessing! Tell me, hast thou borne
My offering to the aged man? — the tapers
To burn before his saint? for gifts, the prize
Of worldly hearts, the man of God disdains.

MESS. He took the torches from my hand, in silence,
And stepping to the altar — where the lamp
Burned to his saint — illumed them at its fire,
And instant set in flames the hermit cell,
Where he has honoured God these ninety years!

ISAB. What hast thou said? What horrors fright my soul?

MESS. And three times shrieking "Woe!" with downward course,
He fled; but silent with uplifted arm
Beckoned me not to follow, nor regard him!
So hither I have hastened, terror sped.

ISAB. O, I am tossed amid the surge again
Of doubt and anxious fears; thy tale appals
With ominous sounds of ill. My daughter found —
Thou say'st; and by my eldest born, Don Manuel?
The tidings ne'er shall bless, that heralded
This deed of woe!

MESS. My mistress! look around,
Behold the hermit's message to thine eyes
Fulfilled. Some charm deludes my sense, or hither
Thy daughter comes, girt by the warlike train
Of thy two sons!

[BEATRICE *is carried in by the Second Chorus on a litter, and placed in the front of the stage. She is still without perception, and motionless.*

ISABELLA, DIEGO, MESSENGER, BEATRICE.

Chorus (BOHEMUND, ROGER, HYPPOLYTE, *and the other nine followers of* DON CÆSAR).

Chorus. (BOHEMUND) Here at thy feet we lay
The maid, obedient to our lord's command:
'Twas thus he spoke — "Conduct her to my mother;
And tell her that her son, Don Cæsar, sends her!"
ISAB. (*is advancing toward her with outstretched arms, and starts back in horror*)
Heavens! she is motionless and pale!
Chorus. (BOHEMUND) She lives,
She will awake, but give her time to rouse
From the dread shock that holds each sense enthralled.
ISAB. My daughter! Child of all my cares and pains!
And is it thus I see thee once again?
Thus thou returnest to thy father's halls!
O let my breath relume thy vital spark;
Yes! I will strain thee to a mother's arms
And hold thee fast — till, from the frost of death
Released, thy life-warm current throbs again.
[*To the Chorus.*
Where hast thou found her? Speak! What dire mischance
Has caused this sight of woe?
Chorus (BOHEMUND) My lips are dumb!
Ask not of me: thy son will tell thee all —
Don Cæsar — for 'tis he that sends her.
ISAB. Tell me,
Would'st thou not say Don Manuel?
Chorus. (BOHEMUND) 'Tis Don Cæsar
That sends her to thee.
ISAB. (*to the* MESSENGER) How declared the seer?
Speak! Was it not Don Manuel?

MESS. 'Twas he!
Thy elder born.
ISAB. Be blessings on his head
Whiche'er it be; to him I owe a daughter.
Alas! that in this blissful hour, so long
Expected, long implored, some envious fiend
Should mar my joy! Oh, I must stem the tide
Of nature's transport! In her childhood's home
I see my daughter; me she knows not — heeds not —
Nor answers to a mother's voice of love!
Ope, ye dear eyelids — hands be warm — and heave
Thou lifeless bosom with responsive throbs
To mine! 'Tis she! — Diego, look! 'tis Beatrice!
The long-concealed — the lost — the rescued one!
Before the world I claim her for my own!
Chorus. (BOHEMUND) New signs of terror to my boding soul
Are pictured; — in amazement lost I stand!
What light shall pierce this gloom of mystery?
ISAB. *(to the Chorus, who exhibit marks of confusion and embarrassment)*
O ye hard hearts! Ye rude unpitying men!
A mother's transport from your breasts of steel
Rebounds, as from the rocks the heaving surge!
I look around your train, nor mark one glance
Of soft regard. Where are my sons? Oh tell me
Why come they not, and from their beaming eyes
Speak comfort to my soul? For here environed,
I stand amid the desert's raging brood,
Or monsters of the deep!
DIEGO. She opes her eyes!
She moves! She lives!
ISAB. She lives! On me be thrown
Her earliest glance!
DIEGO. See! They are closed again —
She shudders!

ISAB. (*to the Chorus*) Quick! Retire — your aspect
frights her. [*Chorus steps back.*
BOHEM. Well pleased I shun her sight.
DIEGO. With outstretched eyes,
And wonderstruck, she seems to measure thee.
BEAT. Not strange those lineaments — where am I?
ISAB. Slowly
Her sense returns.
DIEGO. Behold! upon her knees
She sinks.
BEAT. O angel visage of my mother!
ISAB. Child of my heart!
BEAT. See! kneeling at thy feet
The guilty one!
ISAB. I hold thee in my arms!
Enough — forgotten all!
DIEGO. Look in my face,
Canst thou remember me?
BEAT. The reverend brows
Of honest old Diego!
ISAB. Faithful guardian
Of thy young years.
BEAT. And am I once again
With kindred?
ISAB. Nought but death shall part us more!
BEAT. Wilt thou ne'er send me to the stranger?
ISAB. Never!
Fate is appeased.
BEAT. And am I next thy heart?
And was it all a dream — a hideous dream?
My mother! at my feet he fell! — I know not
What brought me hither — yet 'tis well. — O bliss!
That I am safe in thy protecting arms;
They would have ta'en me to the princess mother —
Sooner to death!
ISAB. My daughter, calm thy fears;
Messina's princess —

BEAT. Name her not again!
At that ill-omened sound the chill of death
Creeps through my trembling frame.
ISAB. My child! but hear me —
BEAT. She has two sons by mortal hate dissevered,
Don Manuel and Don Cæsar —
ISAB. 'Tis myself!
Behold thy mother!
BEAT. Have I heard thee? Speak.
ISAB. I am thy mother, and Messina's Princess!
BEAT. Art thou Don Manuel's and Don Cæsar's mother?
ISAB. And thine! They are thy brethren whom thou nam'st.
BEAT. O gleam of horrid light!
ISAB. What troubles thee?
Say, whence this strange emotion?
BEAT. Yes, 'twas they!
Now I remember all; no dream deceived me,
They met — 'tis fearful truth! Unhappy men! —
Where have ye hid him?

[*She rushes toward the Chorus: they turn away from her. A funeral march is heard in the distance.*

Chorus. Horror! Horror!
ISAB. Hid!
Speak — who is hid? and what is true? Ye stand
In silent dull amaze — as tho' ye fathomed
Her words of mystery! — In your faltering tones —
Your brows — I read of horrors yet unknown,
That would refrain my tongue! What is it? Tell me!
I will know all! Why fix ye on the door
That awe-struck gaze? What mournful music sounds?

[*The march is heard nearer.*

Chorus. (BOHEMUND) It comes! it comes! and all shall be declared
With terrible voice. My mistress! steel thy heart,

Be firm, and bear with courage what awaits thee —
For more than woman's soul thy destined griefs
Demand.

ISAB. What comes? and what awaits me? Hark!
With fearful tones the death-wail smites mine ear —
It echoes thro' the house! Where are my sons?

[*The first Semichorus brings in the body of* DON MANUEL *on a bier, which is placed at the side of the stage. A black pall is spread over it.*

ISABELLA, BEATRICE, DIEGO.

Both Choruses.

First Chorus (CAJETAN).

With Sorrow in his train,
From street to street the King of Terror glides;
With stealthy foot, and slow
He creeps where'er the fleeting race
Of man abides!
In turn at every gate
Is heard the dreaded knock of Fate,
The message of unutterable woe!

BERENGAR.

When, in the sere
And Autumn leaves decayed,
The mournful forest tells how quickly fade
The glories of the year!
When in the silent tomb opprest,
Frail man, with weight of days,
Sinks to his tranquil rest;
Contented Nature but obeys
Her everlasting law, —
The general doom awakes no shuddering awe!

But, mortals, oh! prepare
For mightier ills: with ruthless hand,
Fell murder cuts the holy band —
The kindred tie: insatiate Death,
With unrelenting rage,
Bears to his bark the flower of blooming age!

CAJETAN.

When clouds athwart the lowering sky
Are driven — when bursts with hollow moan
The thunder's peal — our trembling bosoms own
The might of awful Destiny!
Yet oft the lightning's glare
Darts sudden thro' the cloudless air: —
Then in thy short delusive day
Of bliss, oh! dread the treacherous snare;
Nor prize the fleeting goods and vain,
The flowers that bloom but to decay!
Nor wealth, nor joy, nor aught but pain,
Was e'er to mortal's lot secure: —
Our first best lesson — to endure!

ISAB. What shall I hear? What horrors lurk beneath
This funeral pall?
[*She steps toward the bier, but suddenly pauses, and stands irresolute.*
Some strange mysterious dread
Enthrals my sense. I would approach, and sudden
The ice-cold grasp of terror holds me back!
[*To* BEATRICE, *who has thrown herself between her and the bier.*
Whate'er it be, I will unveil —
[*On raising the pall, she discovers the body of* DON MANUEL.
Eternal Powers! It is my son!

[*She stands in mute horror.* BEATRICE *sinks to the ground with a shriek of anguish near the bier.*

Chorus. Unhappy mother! 'tis thy son. Thy lips
Have uttered what my faltering tongue denied!

ISAB. My soul! My Manuel! O eternal grief!
And it is thus I see thee? Thus thy life
Has bought thy sister from the spoiler's rage?
Where was thy brother? Could no arm be found
To shield thee? — O be curst the hand that dug
These gory wounds! A curse on her that bore
The murderer of my son! Ten thousand curses
On all their race!

Chorus. Woe! Woe!

ISAB. And is it thus
Ye keep your word, ye gods? Is this your truth?
Alas! for him that trusts with honest heart
Your soothing wiles. Why have I hoped and trembled?
And this the issue of my prayers! Attend,
Ye terror-stricken witnesses, that feed
Your gaze upon my anguish; learn to know
How warning visions cheat, and boding seers
But mock our credulous hopes: —let none believe
The voice of Heaven!
When in my teeming womb
This daughter lay, her father, in a dream,
Saw from his nuptial couch two laurels grow,
And in the midst a lily all in flames,
That catching swift the boughs and knotted stems
Burst forth with crackling rage, and o'er the house
Spread in one mighty sea of fire. Perplexed
By this terrific dream, my husband sought
The counsels of the mystic art, and thus
Pronounced the sage — "If I a daughter bore,
The murderess of his sons, the destined spring
Of ruin to our house, the baleful child
Should see the light."

Chorus (CAJETAN *and* BOHEMUND).

What hast thou said, my mistress?
Woe! Woe!

ISAB. For this her ruthless father spoke
The dire behest of death. I rescued her,
The innocent, the doomed one: — from my arms
The babe was torn: to stay the curse of Heaven,
And save my sons, the mother gave her child;
And now by robber hands her brother falls; —
My child is guiltless; — O, she slew him not!

Chorus. Woe! Woe!

ISAB. No trust the fabling readers of the stars
Have e'er deserved! Hear how another spoke
With comfort to my soul, and him I deemed
Inspired to voice the secrets of the skies!
"My daughter should unite in love the hearts
Of my dissevered sons:" — and thus their tales
Of curse and blessing on her head proclaim
Each other's falsehood. No! she ne'er has brought
A curse — the innocent! nor time was given
The blessed promise to fulfil! Their tongues
Were false alike — their boasted art in vain —
With trick of words they cheat our credulous ears,
Or are themselves deceived! Nought ye may know
Of dark futurity, the sable streams
Of hell the fountain of your hidden lore,
Or yon bright spring of everlasting light!

First Chorus (CAJETAN).

Woe! Woe! thy tongue refrain!
Oh, pause, nor thus with impious rage
The might of Heaven profane;
The holy oracles are wise —
Expect with awe thy coming destinies!

ISAB. My tongue shall speak as prompts my swelling heart;

My griefs shall cry to Heaven! Why do we lift
Our suppliant hands, and at the sacred shrines
Kneel to adore? Good easy dupes! What win we
From faith and pious awe? — to touch with prayer
The tenants of yon azure realms on high
Were hard as with an arrow's point to pierce
The silvery moon. Hid is the wound of Time,
Impregnable to mortal glance, and deaf
The adamantine walls of heaven rebound
The voice of anguish: — O 'tis one, whate'er
The flight of birds — the aspect of the stars!
The book of nature is a maze — a dream
The sage's art, — and every sign a falsehood!

Second Chorus (BOHEMUND).

Woe! Woe! Ill-fated woman, stay
Thy maddening blasphemies;
Thou but disown'st, with purblind eyes,
The flaming orb of day!
Confess the gods — they dwell on high —
They circle thee with awful majesty!

All the Knights.

Confess the gods — they dwell on high —
They circle thee with awful majesty!

BEATRICE.

Why hast thou saved thy daughter, and defied
The curse of Heaven, that marked me in thy womb
The child of woe? Short-sighted mother! — vain
Thy little arts, to cheat the doom declared
By the all-wise interpreters, that knit
The far and near; and with prophetic ken,
See the late harvest spring in times unborn.
O thou hast wrought destruction on thy race,

Withholding from the avenging gods their prey;
Threefold, with new embittered rage, they ask
The direful penalty; no thanks thy boon
Of life deserves — the fatal gift was sorrow!

Second Chorus (BERENGAR) *looking toward the door with signs of agitation.*

Hark to the sound of dread!
The rattling brazen din I hear!
Of hell-born snakes the hissing tones are near!
Yes — 'tis the Furies' tread!

CAJETAN.

In crumbling ruin wide,
Fall, fall, thou roof, and sink thou trembling floor
That bear'st the dread unearthly stride!
Ye sable damps arise!
Mount from the abyss in smoky spray,
And pall the brightness of the day!
Vanish, ye guardian powers!
They come! The avenging deities!

DON CÆSAR, ISABELLA, BEATRICE. *The Chorus.*

On the entrance of DON CÆSAR, *the Chorus station themselves before him imploringly. He remains standing alone in the centre of the stage.*

BEAT. Alas! 'tis he —
ISAB. (*stepping to meet him*) My Cæsar! O, my son!
And is it thus I meet thee? Look! Behold!
The crime of hand accurst! —

[*She leads him to the corse.*

First Chorus (CAJETAN, BERENGAR).

Break forth once more
Ye wounds! Flow, flow, in swarthy flood,
Thou streaming gore!

ISAB. Shuddering with earnest gaze, and motionless,
Thou stand'st: yes! there my hopes repose, and all
That earth has of thy brother; in the bud
Nipp'd is your concord's tender flower, nor ever
With beauteous fruit shall glad a mother's eyes.
DON C. Be comforted; thy sons, with honest heart,
To peace aspired, but Heaven's decree was blood!
ISAB. I know thou lovedst him well; I saw between ye,
With joy, the bands of nature sweetly twined;
Thou wouldst have borne him in thy heart of hearts
With rich atonement of long wasted years!
But see — fell murder thwarts thy dear design,
And nought remains but vengeance!
DON C. Come, my mother,
This is no place for thee. Oh, haste and leave
This sight of woe! [*He endeavours to drag her away.*
ISAB. (*throwing herself into his arms*) Thou liv'st! I have a son!
BEAT. Alas! my mother!
DON C. On this faithful bosom
Weep out thy pains; — nor lost thy son, — his love
Shall dwell immortal in thy Cæsar's breast.

First Chorus (CAJETAN, BERENGAR, MANFRED).

Break forth, ye wounds! —
Dumb witnesses! — the truth proclaim;
Flow fast, thou gory stream!

ISAB. (*clasping the hands of* DON CÆSAR *and* BEATRICE) My children!

DON C. Oh, 'tis ecstasy! my mother,
To see her in thy arms! — henceforth in love
A daughter — sister —
ISAB. (*interrupting him*) Thou hast kept thy word,
My son; — to thee I owe the rescued one;
Yes, thou hast sent her —
DON C. (*in astonishment*) Whom, my mother, sayest thou,
That I have sent?
ISAB. She stands before thine eyes —
Thy sister.
DON C. She! My sister?
ISAB. Ay, what other?
DON C. My sister?
ISAB. Thou hast sent her to me!
DON C. Horror!
His sister, too!
Chorus. Woe! Woe!
BEAT. Alas! my mother!
ISAB. Speak! I am all amaze!
DON C. Be curst the day
When I was born!
ISAB. Eternal powers!
DON C. Accurst
The womb that bore me; curst thy secret arts,
The spring of all this woe; instant to crush thee,
Though the dread thunder swept — ne'er should this arm
Refrain the bolts of death: — I slew my brother!
Hear it and tremble! in her arms I found him —
She was my love, my chosen bride; — and he —
My brother — in her arms! Thou hast heard all!
If it be true — oh, if she be my sister —
And his! — then I have done a deed that mocks
The power of sacrifice and prayers to ope
The gates of mercy to my soul!

Chorus (BOHEMUND).

The tidings on thy heart dismayed
Have burst, and nought remains; behold!
'Tis come, nor long delayed,
Whate'er the warning seers foretold:
They spoke the message from on high,
Their lips proclaimed resistless destiny!
The mortal shall the curse fulfil,
Who seeks to turn predestined ill.

ISAB. The gods have done their worst; if they be true
Or false, 'tis one — for nothing they can add
To this — the measure of their rage is full.
Why should I tremble that have nought to fear?
My darling son lies murdered, and the living
I call my son no more. Oh! I have borne
And nourished at my breast a basilisk
That stung my best-loved child. My daughter, haste,
And leave this house of horrors — I devote it
To the avenging fiends! — In evil hour
'Twas crime that brought me hither, and of crime
The victim I depart. Unwillingly
I came — in sorrow I have lived — despairing
I quit these halls; on me, the innocent,
Descends this weight of woe! Enough — 'tis shown
That Heaven is just, and oracles are true!

[*Exit, followed by* DIEGO.

BEATRICE, DON CÆSAR, *The Chorus.*

DON C. (*detaining* BEATRICE) My sister, wouldst thou leave me? On this head
A mother's curse may fall — a brother's blood
Cry with accusing voice to Heaven — all Nature
Invoke eternal vengeance on my soul —
But thou — Oh! curse me not — I cannot bear it!

[BEATRICE *points with averted eyes to the body.*
I have not slain thy lover! 'twas thy brother,
And mine, that fell beneath my sword; and near
As the departed one, the living owns
The ties of blood; remember, too, 'tis I
That most a sister's pity need — for pure
His spirit winged its flight, and I am guilty!
[BEATRICE *bursts into an agony of tears.*
Weep! I will blend my tears with thine — nay, more,
I will avenge thy brother; but the lover —
Weep not for him — thy passionate yearning tears
My inmost heart. Oh! from the boundless depths
Of our affliction, let me gather this,
The last and only comfort — but to know
That we are dear alike. One lot fulfilled
Has made our rights and wretchedness the same;
Entangled in one snare we fall together,
Three hapless victims of unpitying fate,
And share the mournful privilege of tears.
But when I think that for the lover more
Than for the brother bursts thy sorrow's tide,
Then rage and envy mingle with my pain,
And Hope's last balm forsakes my withering soul! —
Nor joyful, as beseems, can I requite
This injured shade: — yet after him content
To Mercy's throne my contrite spirit shall fly,
Sped by this hand — if dying I may know
That in one urn our ashes shall repose,
With pious office of a sister's care.
[*He throws his arms around her with passionate tenderness.*
I loved thee, as I ne'er had loved before,
When thou wert strange; and that I bear the curse
Of brother's blood, 'tis but because I loved thee
With measureless transport: love was all my guilt,
But now thou art my sister, and I claim
Soft pity's tribute.

[*He regards her with inquiring glances, and an air of painful suspense — then turns away with vehemence.*

No! in this dread presence
I cannot bear these tears — my courage flies,
And doubt distracts my soul. Go, weep in secret —
Leave me in error's maze — but never, never,
Behold me more: I will not look again
On thee, nor on thy mother. Oh! how passion
Laid bare her secret heart! She never loved me!
She mourned her best-loved son — that was her cry
Of grief — and nought was mine but show of fondness!
And thou art false as she! make no disguise —
Recoil with horror from my sight — this form
Shall never shock thee more — begone for ever! [*Exit.*

[*She stands irresolute in a tumult of conflicting passions — then tears herself from the spot.*

Chorus (CAJETAN).

. . . . . .

Happy the man — his lot I prize —
That far from pomps and turmoil vain,
Child-like on Nature's bosom lies
Amid the stillness of the plain.
My heart is sad in the princely hall,
When from the towering pride of state,
I see with headlong ruin fall,
How swift! the good and great!
And he — from Fortune's storms at rest —
Smiles, in the quiet haven laid,
Who, timely warned, has owned how blest
The refuge of the cloistered shade;
To honour's race has bade farewell,
Its idle joys and empty shows;
Insatiate wishes learned to quell,
And lulled in Wisdom's calm repose: —

No more shall Passion's maddening brood
  Impel the busy scenes to try,
Nor on his peaceful cell intrude
  The form of sad humanity!
'Mid crowds and strife each mortal ill
  Abides — the grisly train of woe
Shuns like the pest the breezy hill,
  To haunt the smoky marts below.

BERENGAR, BOHEMUND, *and* MANFRED.

On the mountains is freedom! the breath of decay
  Never sullies the fresh flowing air;
O nature is perfect wherever we stray;
  'Tis man that deforms it with care.

The whole Chorus repeats.

On the mountains is freedom, etc.

DON CÆSAR, *the Chorus.*

DON C. (*more collected*) I use the princely rights —
  'tis the last time —
To give this body to the ground, and pay
Fit honours to the dead. So mark, my friends,
My bosom's firm resolve, and quick fulfil
Your lord's behest. Fresh in your memory lives
The mournful pomp, when to the tomb ye bore
So late my royal sire; scarce in these halls
Are still the echoes of the funeral wail; —
Another corse succeeds, and in the grave
Weighs down its fellow-dust — almost our torch,
With borrowed lustre from the last, may pierce
The monumental gloom; and on the stair,
Blend in one throng confused two mourning trains.
Then in the sacred royal dome that guards
The ashes of my sire, prepare with speed
The funeral rites; unseen of mortal eye,

And noiseless be your task — let all be graced,
As then, with circumstance of kingly state.
BOHEM. My prince, it shall be quickly done; for still
Upreared, the gorgeous catafalque recalls
The dread solemnity; no hand disturbed
The edifice of Death.
DON C. The yawning grave
Amid the haunts of life? No goodly sign
Was this: the rites fulfilled, why lingered yet
The trappings of the funeral show?
BOHEM. Your strife
With fresh embittered hate o'er all Messina
Woke Discord's maddening flames, and from the dead
Our cares withdrew — so desolate remained,
And closed the sanctuary.
DON C. Make no delay;
This very night fulfil your task, for well
Beseems the midnight gloom! To-morrow's sun
Shall find this palace cleansed of every stain,
And light a happier race.
[*Exit the Second Chorus, with the body of* DON MANUEL.
CAJET. Shall I invite
The brotherhood of monks, with rites ordained
By Holy Church of old, to celebrate
The office of departed souls, and hymn
The buried one to everlasting rest?
DON C. Their strains above my tomb shall sound for ever
Amid the torches' blaze — no solemn rites
Beseem the day when gory murder scares
Heaven's pardoning grace.
CAJET. O, let not wild despair
Tempt thee to impious rash resolve. My prince,

No mortal arm shall e'er avenge this deed;
And penance calms, with soft atoning power,
The wrath on high.
DON C. If for eternal justice
Earth has no minister, myself shall wield
The avenging sword; though Heaven, with gracious ear,
Inclines to sinners' prayers, with blood alone
Atoned is murder's guilt.
CAJET. To stem the tide
Of dire misfortune, that with maddening rage
Bursts o'er your house, were nobler than to pile
Accumulated woe.
DON C. The curse of old
Shall die with me! Death self-imposed alone
Can break the chain of Fate.
CAJET. Thou ow'st thyself
A sovereign to this orphaned land, by thee
Robbed of its other lord!
DON C. The avenging gods
Demand their prey — some other deity
May guard the living!
CAJET. Wide as e'er the sun
In glory beams, the realm of Hope extends;
But — Oh, remember! — nothing may we gain
From Death!
DON C. Remember thou thy vassal's duty; —
Remember, and be silent! Leave to me
To follow, as I list, the spirit of power
That leads me to the goal. No happy one
May look into my breast: — but if thy prince
Owns not a subject's homage, dread at least
The murderer! — the accurst! — and to the head
Of the unhappy — sacred to the gods —
Give honours due. The pangs that rend my soul —
What I have suffered — what I feel — have left
No place for earthly thoughts!

DONNA ISABELLA, DON CÆSAR, *The Chorus.*

ISAB. (*enters with hesitating steps, and looks irresolutely toward* DON CÆSAR; *at last she approaches, and addresses him with collected tones*)

I thought mine eyes should ne'er behold thee more;—
Thus I had vowed despairing! Oh, my son!
How quickly all a mother's stern resolves
Melt into air! 'Twas but the cry of rage
That stifled Nature's pleading voice; but now
What tidings of mysterious import call me
Forth from the desolate chambers of my sorrow?
Shall I believe it? Is it true? — one day
Robs me of both my sons?

Chorus.

Behold! with willing steps and free,
Thy son prepares to tread
The paths of dark eternity —
The silent mansions of the dead.
My prayers are vain; but thou, with power confest
Of nature's holiest passion, storm his breast!

ISAB. I call the curses back — that in the frenzy
Of blind despair on thy beloved head
I poured. A mother may not curse the child
That from her nourishing breast drew life, and gave
Sweet recompense for all her travail past:
Heaven would not hear the impious vows; they fell
With quick rebound, and heavy with my tears,
Down from the flaming vault.
Live! live! my son!
For I may rather bear to look on thee —
The murderer of one child — than weep for both!

DON C. Heedless and vain, my mother, are thy prayers

For me and for thyself; — I have no place
Among the living: — if thine eyes may brook
The murderer's sight abhorred — I could not bear
The mute reproach of thy eternal sorrow.

ISAB. Silent or loud, my son, reproach shall never
Disturb thy breast — ne'er in these halls shall sound
The voice of wailing, gently on my tears
My griefs shall flow away: — the sport alike
Of pitiless Fate, together we will mourn,
And veil the deed of blood.

DON C. (*with a faltering voice, and taking her hand*)
Thus it shall be,
My mother — thus with silent, gentle woe
Thy grief shall fade: — but when one common tomb
The murderer and his victim closes round —
When o'er our dust one monumental stone
Is rolled — the curse shall cease — thy love no more
Unequal bless thy sons; the precious tears
Thine eyes of beauty weep shall sanctify
Alike our memories. Yes! In death are quenched
The fires of rage; and Hatred owns subdued,
The mighty reconciler. Pity bends
An angel form above the funeral urn,
With weeping dear embrace. Then to the tomb
Stay not my passage: — Oh! forbid me not,
Thus with atoning sacrifice to quell
The curse of Heaven.

ISAB. All Christendom is rich
In shrines of mercy, where the troubled heart
May find repose. Oh! many a heavy burden
Have sinners in Loretto's mansion laid;
And Heaven's peculiar blessing breathes around
The grave that has redeemed the world! — The prayers
Of the devout are precious — fraught with store
Of grace, they win forgiveness from the skies; —

And on the soil by gory murder stained
Shall rise the purifying fane.
DON C. We pluck
The arrow from the wound — but the torn heart
Shall ne'er be healed. Let him who can, drag on
A weary life of penance and of pain,
To cleanse the spot of everlasting guilt; —
I would not live the victim of despair;
No! I must meet with beaming eye the smile
Of happy ones, and breathe erect the air
Of liberty and joy. While yet alike
We shared thy love, then o'er my days of youth
Pale Envy cast his withering shade; and now,
Think'st thou my heart could brook the dearer ties
That bind thee in thy sorrow to the dead?
Death, in his undecaying palace throned,
To the pure diamond of perfect virtue
Sublimes the mortal, and with chastening fire
Each gathered stain of frail humanity
Purges and burns away; high as the stars
Tower o'er this earthly sphere, he soars above me;
And as by ancient hate dissevered long,
Brethren and equal denizens we lived,
So now my restless soul with envy pines,
That he has won from me the glorious prize
Of immortality, and like a god
In memory marches on to times unborn!
ISAB. My sons! Why have I called you to Messina?
To find for each a grave? I brought ye hither
To calm your strife to peace. Lo! Fate has turned
My hopes to blank despair.
DON C. Whate'er was spoke,
My mother, is fulfilled! Blame not the end
By Heaven ordained. We trode our father's halls
With hopes of peace; and reconciled for ever,
Together we shall sleep in death.

ISAB. My son,
Live for thy mother! In the stranger's land,
Say, wouldst thou leave me friendless and alone,
To cruel scorn a prey — no filial arm
To shield my helpless age?
DON C. When all the world
With heartless taunts pursues thee, to our grave
For refuge fly, my mother, and invoke
Thy sons' divinity — we shall be gods!
And we will hear thy prayers: and as the Twins
Of Heaven, a beaming star of comfort shine
To the tost shipman — we will hover near thee
With present help, and soothe thy troubled soul!
ISAB. Live — for thy mother, live, my son —
Must I lose all?

[*She throws her arms about him with passionate emotion. He gently disengages himself, and, turning his face away, extends to her his hand.*

DON C. Farewell!
ISAB. I can no more!
Too well my tortured bosom owns how weak
A mother's prayers: a mightier voice shall sound
Resistless on thy heart.

[*She goes toward the entrance of the scene.*

My daughter, come!
A brother calls him to the realms of night;
Perchance with golden hues of earthly joy
The sister, the beloved, may gently lure
The wanderer to life again.

[BEATRICE *appears at the entrance of the scene.*

DONNA ISABELLA, DON CÆSAR, *and the Chorus.*

DON C. (*on seeing her, covers his face with his hands*) My mother!
What hast thou done?

ISAB. (*leading* BEATRICE *forward*) A mother's prayers are vain!
Kneel at his feet — conjure him — melt his heart!
Oh! bid him live!
DON C. Deceitful mother, thus
Thou triest thy son! And wouldst thou stir my soul
Again to passion's strife, and make the sun
Beloved once more, now when I tread the paths
Of everlasting night? See where he stands —
Angel of life! — and, wondrous beautiful,
Shakes from his plenteous horn the fragrant store
Of golden fruits and flowers, that breathe around
Divinest airs of joy; — my heart awakes
In the warm sunbeam — hope returns, and life
Thrills in my breast anew.
ISAB. (*to* BEATRICE) Thou wilt prevail!
Or none! Implore him that he live, nor rob
The staff and comfort of our days.
BEAT. The loved one
A sacrifice demands. Oh, let me die
To soothe a brother's shade! Yes, I will be
The victim! Ere I saw the light forewarned
To death, I live a wrong to Heaven! The curse
Pursues me still: — 'twas I that slew thy son —
I waked the slumbering furies of their strife —
Be mine the atoning blood!
CAJET. Ill-fated mother!
Impatient all thy children haste to doom,
And leave thee on the desolate waste alone
Of joyless life.
BEAT. Oh, spare thy precious days
For nature's band. Thy mother needs a son,
My brother, live for her! Light were the pang
To lose a daughter — but a moment shown,
Then snatched away!
DON C. (*with deep emotion*) 'Tis one to live or die,

Blest with a sister's love!
BEAT. Say — dost thou envy
Thy brother's ashes?
DON C. In thy grief he lives
A hallowed life — my doom is death for ever!
BEAT. My brother!
DON C. Sister! are thy tears for me?
BEAT. Live for our mother!
DON C. (*dropping her hand and stepping back*)
For our mother?
BEAT. (*hiding her head in his breast*) Live
For her and for thy sister!
Chorus. (BOHEMUND) She has won!
Resistless are her prayers. Despairing mother,
Awake to hope again — his choice is made!
Thy son shall live!

[*At this moment an anthem is heard. The folding-doors are thrown open, and in the Church is seen the Catafalque erected, and the coffin surrounded with candlesticks.*

DON C. (*turning to the coffin*) I will not rob thee, brother!
The sacrifice is thine: — Hark! from the tomb,
Mightier than mother's tears, or sister's love,
Thy voice resistless cries: — my arms enfold
A treasure, potent with celestial joys,
To deck this earthly sphere, and make a lot
Worthy the gods! but shall I live in bliss,
While in the tomb thy sainted innocence
Sleeps unavenged? Thou, Ruler of our days,
All just — all wise — let not the world behold
Thy partial care! I saw her tears! — enough —
They flowed for me! I am content: my brother!
I come!

[*He stabs himself with a dagger, and falls dead at his sister's feet. She throws herself into her mother's arms.*

Chorus, CAJETAN. (*after a deep silence*) In dread amaze I stand, nor know
If I should mourn his fate. One truth revealed
Speaks in my breast; — no good supreme is life;
But of all earthly ills the chief is — Guilt!

THE END.

The Use of the Chorus in Tragedy

The

Use of the Chorus in Tragedy

A POETICAL work must vindicate itself: — if the execution be defective, little aid can be derived from commentaries.

On these grounds, I might safely leave the Chorus to be its own advocate, if we had ever seen it presented in an appropriate manner. But it must be remembered that a dramatic composition first assumes the character of a whole by means of representation on the stage. The poet supplies only the words, to which, in a lyrical tragedy, music and rhythmical motion are essential accessories. It follows, then, that if the Chorus is deprived of accompaniments appealing so powerfully to the senses, it will appear a superfluity in the economy of the drama — a mere hindrance to the development of the plot —destructive to the illusion of the scene, and wearisome to the spectators.

To do justice to the Chorus, more especially if our aims in poetry be of a grand and elevated character, we must transport ourselves from the actual to a possible stage. It is the privilege of art to furnish for itself whatever is requisite, and the accidental deficiency of auxiliaries ought not to confine the plastic imagination of the poet. He aspires to whatever is most dignified, he labours to realise the ideal in his own

mind — though in the execution of his purpose he must needs accommodate himself to circumstances.

The assertion so commonly made, that the public degrades art, is not well founded. It is the artist that brings the public to the level of his own conceptions; and, in every age in which art has gone to decay, it has fallen through its professors. The people need feeling alone, and feeling they possess. They take their station before the curtain with an unvoiced longing, with a multifarious capacity. They bring with them an aptitude for what is highest — they derive the greatest pleasure from what is judicious and true; and if, with these powers of appreciation, they deign to be satisfied with inferior productions, still, if they have once tasted what is excellent, they will, in the end, insist on having it supplied to them.

It is sometimes objected that the poet may labour according to an ideal — that the critic may judge from ideas, but that mere executive art is subject to contingencies, and depends for effect on the occasion. Managers will be obstinate; actors are bent on display — the audience is inattentive and unruly. Their object is relaxation, and they are disappointed if mental exertion be required, when they expected only amusement. But if the theatre be made instrumental toward higher objects, the pleasure of the spectator will not be increased, but ennobled. It will be a diversion, but a poetical one. All art is dedicated to pleasure, and there can be no higher and worthier end than to make men happy. The true art is that which provides the highest degree of pleasure; and this consists in the abandonment of the spirit to the free play of all its faculties.

Every one expects from the imaginative arts a certain emancipation from the bounds of reality: we are willing to give a scope to fancy, and recreate ourselves with the possible. The man who expects it the least

will nevertheless forget his ordinary pursuits, his every-day existence and individuality, and experience delight from uncommon incidents: — if he be of a serious turn of mind, he will acknowledge on the stage that moral government of the world which he fails to discover in real life. But he is, at the same time, perfectly aware that all is an empty show, and that, in a true sense, he is feeding only on dreams. When he returns from the theatre to the world of realities, he is again compressed within its narrow bounds; he is its denizen as before — for it remains what it was, and in him nothing has been changed. What, then, has he gained beyond a momentary illusive pleasure which vanished with the occasion?

It is because a passing recreation is alone desired, that a mere show of truth is thought sufficient. I mean that probability or vraisemblance which is so highly esteemed, but which the commonest workers are able to substitute for the true.

Art has for its object not merely to afford a transient pleasure, to excite to a momentary dream of liberty; its aim is to make us absolutely free; and this it accomplishes by awakening, exercising, and perfecting in us a power to remove to an objective distance the sensible world; (which otherwise only burdens us as rugged matter and presses us down with a brute influence); to transform it into the free working of our spirit, and thus acquire a dominion over the material by means of ideas. For the very reason also that true art requires somewhat of the objective and real, it is not satisfied with a show of truth. It rears its ideal edifice on truth itself — on the solid and deep foundations of nature.

But how art can be at once altogether ideal, yet in the strictest sense real; — how it can entirely leave the actual, and yet harmonise with nature, is a problem to the multitude: — and hence the distorted views which

prevail in regard to poetical and plastic works; for to ordinary judgments these two requisites seem to counteract each other.

It is commonly supposed that one may be attained by the sacrifice of the other: — the result is a failure to arrive at either. One to whom nature has given a true sensibility, but denied the plastic imaginative power, will be a faithful painter of the real; he will adapt casual appearances, but never catch the spirit of nature. He will only reproduce to us the matter of the world, which, not being our own work, the product of our creative spirit, can never have the beneficent operation of art, of which the essence is freedom. Serious, indeed, but unpleasing, is the cast of thought with which such an artist and poet dismisses us; — we feel ourselves painfully thrust back into the narrow sphere of reality by means of the very art which ought to have emancipated us. On the other hand, a writer, endowed with a lively fancy, but destitute of warmth and individuality of feeling, will not concern himself in the least about truth; he will sport with the stuff of the world, and endeavour to surprise by whimsical combinations; and as his whole performance is nothing but foam and glitter, he will, it is true, engage the attention for a time, but build up and confirm nothing in the understanding. His playfulness is, like the gravity of the other, thoroughly unpoetical. To string together at will fantastical images, is not to travel into the realm of the ideal; and the imitative reproduction of the actual cannot be called the representation of nature. Both requisites stand so little in contradiction to each other that they are rather one and the same thing; that art is only true insomuch as it altogether forsakes the actual, and becomes purely ideal. Nature herself is an idea of the mind, and is never presented to the senses. She lies under the veil of appearances, but is herself never apparent. To the art of the ideal alone

is lent, or, rather, absolutely given, the privilege to grasp the spirit of the all, and bind it in a corporeal form.

Yet, in truth, even Art cannot present it to the senses, but by means of her creative power to the imaginative faculty alone; and it is thus that she becomes more true than all reality, and more real than all experience. It follows from these premises that the artist can use no single element taken from reality as he finds it — that his work must be ideal in all its parts, if it be designed to have, as it were, an intrinsic reality, and to harmonise with nature.

What is true of art and poetry, in the abstract, holds good as to their various kinds; and we may apply what has been advanced to the subject of tragedy. In this department, it is still necessary to controvert the ordinary notion of the natural, with which poetry is altogether incompatible. A certain ideality has been allowed in painting, though, I fear, on grounds rather conventional than intrinsic; but in dramatic works what is desired is illusion, which, if it could be accomplished by means of the actual, would be, at best, a paltry deception. All the externals of a theatrical representation are opposed to this notion; all is merely a symbol of the real. The day itself in a theatre is an artificial one; the metrical dialogue is itself ideal; yet the conduct of the play must forsooth be real, and the general effect sacrificed to a part. Thus the French, who have utterly misconceived the spirit of the ancients, adopted on the stage the unities of time and place in the most common and empirical sense; as though there were any place but the bare ideal one, or any other time than the mere sequence of the incidents.

By the introduction of a metrical dialogue an important progress has been made toward the poetical tragedy. A few lyrical dramas have been successful on the stage, and poetry, by its own living energy, has

triumphed over prevailing prejudices. But so long as these erroneous views are entertained little has been done — for it is not enough barely to tolerate as a poetic license that which is, in truth, the essence of all poetry. The introduction of the Chorus would be the last and decisive step; and if it only served this end, namely, to declare open and honourable warfare against naturalism in art, it would be for us a living wall which Tragedy had drawn around herself, to guard her from contact with the world of reality, and maintain her own ideal soil, her poetical freedom.

It is well known that the Greek tragedy had its origin in the Chorus; and though, in process of time, it became independent, still it may be said that poetically, and in spirit, the Chorus was the source of its existence, and that without these persevering supporters and witnesses of the incident a totally different order of poetry would have grown out of the drama. The abolition of the Chorus, and the debasement of this sensibly powerful organ into the characterless substitute of a confidant, is by no means such an improvement in tragedy as the French, and their imitators, would have it supposed to be.

The old tragedy, which at first only concerned itself with gods, heroes and kings, introduced the Chorus as an essential accompaniment. The poets found it in nature, and for that reason employed it. It grew out of the poetical aspect of real life. In the new tragedy it becomes an organ of art which aids in making the poetry prominent. The modern poet no longer finds the Chorus in nature; he must needs create and introduce it poetically; that is, he must resolve on such an adaptation of his story as will admit of its retrocession to those primitive times, and to that simple form of life.

The Chorus thus renders more substantial service to the modern dramatist than to the old poet — and for

this reason, that it transforms the commonplace actual world into the old poetical one; that it enables him to dispense with all that is repugnant to poetry, and conducts him back to the most simple, original, and genuine motives of action. The palaces of kings are in these days closed — courts of justice have been transferred from the gates of cities to the interior of buildings; writing has narrowed the province of speech; the people itself — the sensibly living mass — when it does not operate as brute force, has become a part of the civil polity, and thereby an abstract idea in our minds; the deities have returned within the bosoms of mankind. The poet must reopen the palaces — he must place courts of justice beneath the canopy of heaven — restore the gods, reproduce every extreme which the artificial frame of actual life has abolished — throw aside every factitious influence on the mind or condition of man which impedes the manifestation of his inward nature and primitive character, as the statuary rejects modern costume: — and of all external circumstances adopts nothing but what is palpable in the highest of forms — that of humanity.

But precisely as the painter throws around his figures draperies of ample volume, to fill up the space of his picture richly and gracefully, to arrange its several parts in harmonious masses, to give due play to colour, which charms and refreshes the eye — and at once to envelop human forms in a spiritual veil, and make them visible — so the tragic poet inlays and entwines his rigidly contracted plot and the strong outlines of his characters with a tissue of lyrical magnificence, in which, as in flowing robes of purple, they move freely and nobly, with a sustained dignity and exalted repose.

In a higher organisation, the material, or the elementary, need not be visible; the chemical colour vanishes in the finer tints of the imaginative one. The material, however, has its peculiar effect, and may be included

in an artistical composition. But it must deserve its place by animation, fulness, and harmony, and give value to the ideal forms which it surrounds, instead of stifling them by its weight.

In respect of the pictorial art, this is obvious to ordinary apprehension, yet in poetry likewise, and in the tragical kind, which is our immediate subject, the same doctrine holds good. Whatever fascinates the senses alone is mere matter, and the rude element of a work of art: — if it take the lead it will inevitably destroy the poetical — which lies at the exact medium between the ideal and the sensible. But man is so constituted that he is ever impatient to pass from what is fanciful to what is common; and reflection must, therefore, have its place even in tragedy. But to merit this place it must, by means of delivery, recover what it wants in actual life; for if the two elements of poetry, the ideal and the sensible, do not operate with an inward mutuality, they must at least act as allies — or poetry is out of the question. If the balance be not intrinsically perfect, the equipoise can only be maintained by an agitation of both scales.

This is what the Chorus effects in tragedy. It is, in itself, not an individual but a general conception; yet it is represented by a palpable body which appeals to the senses with an imposing grandeur. It forsakes the contracted sphere of the incidents to dilate itself over the past and future, over distant times and nations, and general humanity, to deduce the grand results of life, and pronounce the lessons of wisdom. But all this it does with the full power of fancy — with a bold lyrical freedom which ascends, as with godlike step, to the topmost height of worldly things; and it effects it in conjunction with the whole sensible influence of melody and rhythm, in tones and movements.

The Chorus thus exercises a purifying influence on tragic poetry, insomuch as it keeps reflection apart

from the incidents, and by this separation arms it with a poetical vigour; as the painter, by means of a rich drapery, changes the ordinary poverty of costume into a charm and an ornament.

But as the painter finds himself obliged to strengthen the tone of colour of the living subject, in order to counterbalance the material influences — so the lyrical effusions of the Chorus impose upon the poet the necessity of a proportionate elevation of his general diction. It is the Chorus alone which entitles the poet to employ this fulness of tone, which at once charms the senses, pervades the spirit, and expands the mind. This one giant form on his canvas obliges him to mount all his figures on the cothurnus, and thus impart a tragical grandeur to his picture. If the Chorus be taken away, the diction of the tragedy must generally be lowered, or what is now great and majestic will appear forced and overstrained. The old Chorus introduced into the French tragedy would present it in all its poverty, and reduce it to nothing; yet, without doubt, the same accompaniment would impart to Shakespeare's tragedy its true significance.

As the Chorus gives life to the language — so also it gives repose to the action; but it is that beautiful and lofty repose which is the characteristic of a true work of art. For the mind of the spectator ought to maintain its freedom through the most impassioned scenes; it should not be the mere prey of impressions, but calmly and severely detach itself from the emotions which it suffers. The commonplace objection made to the Chorus, that it disturbs the illusion, and blunts the edge of the feelings, is what constitutes its highest recommendation; for it is this blind force of the affections which the true artist deprecates — this illusion is what he disdains to excite. If the strokes which tragedy inflicts on our bosoms followed without respite — the passion would overpower the action. We

should mix ourselves up with the subject matter, and no longer stand above it. It is by holding asunder the different parts, and stepping between the passions with its composing views, that the Chorus restores to us our freedom, which would else be lost in the tempest. The characters of the drama need this intermission in order to collect themselves; for they are no real beings who obey the impulse of the moment, and merely represent individuals — but ideal persons and representatives of their species, who enunciate the deep things of humanity.

Thus much on my attempt to revive the old Chorus on the tragic stage. It is true that choruses are not unknown to modern tragedy; but the Chorus of the Greek drama, as I have employed it — the Chorus, as a single ideal person, furthering and accompanying the whole plot — is of an entirely distinct character; and when, in discussion on the Greek tragedy, I hear mention made of choruses, I generally suspect the speaker's ignorance of his subject. In my view the Chorus has never been reproduced since the decline of the old tragedy.

I have divided it into two parts, and represented it in contest with itself; but this occurs where it acts as a real person, and as an unthinking multitude. As Chorus and an ideal person it is always one and entire. I have also several times dispensed with its presence on the stage. For this liberty I have the example of Æschylus, the creator of tragedy, and Sophocles, the greatest master of his art.

Another license it may be more difficult to excuse. I have blended together the Christian religion and the Pagan mythology, and introduced recollections of the Moorish superstition. But the scene of the drama is Messina — where these three religions either exercised a living influence, or appealed to the senses in monumental remains. Besides, I consider it a privilege of

poetry to deal with different religions as a collective whole, in which everything that bears an individual character, and expresses a peculiar mode of feeling, has its place. Religion itself, the idea of a Divine Power, lies under the veil of all religions; and it must be permitted to the poet to represent it in the form which appears the most appropriate to his subject.

Wilhelm Tell

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

HERMANN GESSLER, Governor of Schwytz and Uri.
WERNER, Baron of Attinghausen, free noble of Switzerland.
ULRICH VON RUDENS, his Nephew.

WERNER STAUFFACHER,
CONRAD HUNN,
HANS AUF DER MAUER,
JORG IM HOFE,
ULRICH DER SCHMIDT,
JOST VON WEILER,
ITEL REDING,
} People of Schwytz.

WALTER FÜRST,
WILHELM TELL,
ROSSELMANN, the Priest,
PETERMANN, Sacristan,
KUONI, Herdsman,
WERNI, Huntsman,
RUODI, Fisherman,
} People of Uri.

ARNOLD OF MELCHTHAL,
CONRAD BAUMGARTEN,
MEYER VON SARNEN,
STRUTH VON WINKELRIED,
KLAUS VON DER FLUE,
BURKHART AM BUHEL,
ARNOLD VON SEWA,
} People of Unterwald.

PFEIFFER OF LUCERNE.
KUNZ OF GERSAU.
JENNI, Fisherman's Son.
SEPPI, Herdsman's Son.
GERTRUDE, Stauffacher's Wife.
HEDWIG, Wife of Tell, Daughter of Fürst.
BERTHA OF BRUNECK, a rich Heiress.

ARMGART,
MECHTHILD,
ELSBETH,
HILDEGARD,
} Peasant Women.

WALTER, WILHELM, } Tell's Sons.
FRIESSHARDT, LEUTHOLD, } Soldiers.
RUDOLPH DER HARRAS, Gessler's Master of the Horse.
JOHANNES PARRICIDA, Duke of Suabia.
STUSSI, Overseer.
THE MAYOR OF URI.
A COURIER.
MASTER STONEMASON, COMPANIONS, AND WORKMEN.
TASKMASTER.
A CRIER.
MONKS OF THE ORDER OF CHARITY.
HORSEMEN OF GESSLER AND LANDENBERG.
MANY PEASANTS; MEN AND WOMEN FROM THE WALDSTETTEN.

Wilhelm Tell

ACT I.

SCENE I.

A high rocky shore of the Lake of Lucerne opposite Schwytz. The lake makes a bend into the land; a hut stands at a short distance from the shore; the fisher boy is rowing about in his boat. Beyond the lake are seen the green meadows, the hamlets and farms of Schwytz, lying in the clear sunshine. On the left are observed the peaks of the Hacken, surrounded with clouds; to the right, and in the remote distance, appear the Glaciers. The Ranz des Vaches, and the tinkling of cattle bells, continue for some time after the rising of the curtain.

FISHER BOY (*sings in his boat*).

Melody of the Ranz des Vaches.

The smile-dimpled lake woo'd to bathe in its deep,
A boy on its green shore had laid him to sleep;
Then heard he a melody
Floating along,
Sweet as the notes
Of an angel's song.
And as thrilling with pleasure he wakes from his rest,
The waters are rippling over his breast;

And a voice from the deep cries,
"With me thou must go,
I charm the young shepherd,
I lure him below."

HERDSMAN (*on the mountains*).

Air. — *Variation of the Ranz des Vaches.*

Farewell, ye green meadows,
Farewell, sunny shore,
The herdsman must leave you,
The summer is o'er.
We go to the hills, but you'll see us again,
When the cuckoo calls, and the merry birds sing,
When the flowers bloom afresh in glade and in glen,
And the brooks sparkle bright in the sunshine of Spring.
Farewell, ye green meadows,
Farewell, sunny shore,
The herdsman must leave you,
The summer is o'er.

CHAMOIS HUNTER (*appearing on the top of a cliff*).

Second Variation of the Ranz des Vaches.

On the heights peals the thunder, and trembles the bridge,
The huntsman bounds on by the dizzying ridge.
Undaunted he hies him
O'er ice-covered wild,
Where leaf never budded,
Nor Spring ever smiled;
And beneath him an ocean of mist, where his eye
No longer the dwellings of man can espy;
Through the parting clouds only
The earth can be seen,

Far down 'neath the vapour
The meadows of green.

[*A change comes over the landscape. A rumbling, cracking noise is heard among the mountains. Shadows of clouds sweep across the scene.*

[RUODI, *the fisherman, comes out of his cottage.* WERNI, *the huntsman, descends from the rocks.* KUONI, *the shepherd, enters, with a milk pail on his shoulders, followed by* SEPPI, *his assistant.*

RUODI. Come, Jenni, bustle, get the boat on shore.
The grizzly Vale-King [1] comes, the glaciers moan,
The Mytenstein [2] is drawing on his hood,
And from the Stormcleft chilly blows the wind;
The storm will burst, before we know what's what.

KUONI. 'Twill rain ere long; my sheep browse eagerly,
And Watcher there is scraping up the earth.

WERNI. The fish are leaping, and the water-hen
Keeps diving up and down. A storm is brewing.

KUONI. (*to his boy*) Look, Seppi, if the beasts be all in sight.

SEPPI. There goes brown Liesel, I can hear her bells.

KUONI. Then all are safe; she ever ranges farthest.

RUODI. You've a fine chime of bells there, master herdsman.

WERNI. And likely cattle, too. Are they your own?

KUONI. I'm not so rich. They are the noble lord's
Of Attinghaus, and told off to my care.

[1] The German is, *Thalvogt*, Ruler of the Valley — the name given figuratively to a dense gray mist which the south wind sweeps into the valleys from the mountain tops. It is well known as the precursor of stormy weather.

[2] A steep rock, standing on the north of Rütli, and nearly opposite to Brumen.

RUODI. How gracefully yon heifer bears her ribbon!

KUONI. Ay, well she knows she's leader of the herd,
And, take it from her, she'd refuse to feed.

RUODI. You're joking now. A beast devoid of reason —

WERNI. Easily said. But beasts have reason, too, —
And that we know, we chamois-hunters, well.
They never turn to feed — sagacious creatures!
Till they have placed a sentinel ahead,
Who pricks his ears whenever we approach,
And gives alarm with clear and piercing pipe.

RUODI. (*to the shepherd*) Are you for home?

KUONI. The Alp is grazed quite bare.

WERNI. A safe return, my friend!

KUONI. The same to you!
Men come not always back from tracks like yours.

RUODI. But who comes here, running at topmost speed?

WERNI. I know the man; 'tis Baumgart of Alzellen.

BAUM. (*rushing in breathless*) For God's sake, ferryman, your boat!

RUODI. How now?
Why all this haste?

BAUM. Cast off! My life's at stake!
Set me across!

KUONI. Why, what's the matter, friend?

WERNI. Who are pursuing you? First tell us that.

BAUM. (*to the fisherman*) Quick, quick, man, quick! they're close upon my heels!
It is the viceroy's men are after me;
If they should overtake me, I am lost.

RUODI. Why are the troopers in pursuit of you?

BAUM. First make me safe and then I'll tell you all.

WERNI. There's blood upon your garments — how is this?

BAUM. The imperial seneschal, who dwelt at Rossberg —

KUONI. How! What! The Wolfshot?[1] Is it he pursues you?

BAUM. He'll ne'er hurt man again; I've settled him.

ALL. (*starting back*) Now, God forgive you, what is this you've done!

BAUM. What every free man in my place had done.
Mine own good household right I have enforced
'Gainst him that would have wrong'd my wife — my honour.

KUONI. How! Wronged you in your honour, did he so?

BAUM. That he did not fulfil his foul desire,
Is due to God and to my trusty axe.

WERNI. And you have cleft his skull then, with your axe?

KUONI. O, tell us all! You've time enough, and more,
While he is getting out the boat there from the beach.

BAUM. When I was in the forest felling timber,
My wife came running out in mortal fear.
"The seneschal," she said, "was in my house,
Had order'd her to get a bath prepared,
And thereupon had ta'en unseemly freedoms,
From which she rid herself, and flew to me."
Arm'd as I was, I sought him, and my axe
Has given his bath a bloody benison.

[1] In German, *Wolfenschiessen* — a young man of noble family, and a native of Unterwalden, who attached himself to the house of Austria and was appointed *Burvogt*, or Seneschal, of the Castle of Rossberg. He was killed by Baumgarten in the manner, and for the cause, mentioned in the text.

WERNI. And you did well; no man can blame the deed.

KUONI. The tyrant! Now he has his just reward!
We men of Unterwald have owed it long.

BAUM. The deed got wind, and now they're in pursuit.
Heavens! whilst we speak, the time is flying fast.

[*It begins to thunder.*

KUONI. Quick, ferryman, and set the good man over.

RUODI. Impossible! a storm is close at hand,
Wait till it pass! You must.

BAUM. Almighty heavens!
I cannot wait; the least delay is death.

KUONI. (*to the fisherman*) Push out — God with you! We should help our neighbours;
The like misfortune may betide us all.

[*Thunder and the roaring of the wind.*

RUODI. The South-wind's up![1] See how the lake is rising!
I cannot steer against both wind and wave.

BAUM. (*clasping him by the knees*) God so help you as now you pity me!

WERNI. His life's at stake. Have pity on him, man!

KUONI. He is a father: has a wife and children.

[*Repeated peals of thunder.*

RUODI. What! and have I not, then, a life to lose,
A wife and child at home as well as he?
See how the breakers foam, and toss, and whirl,

[1] Literally, The *Föhn* is loose! "When," says Müller, in his history of Switzerland, "the wind called the Föhn is high, the navigation of the lake becomes extremely dangerous. Such is its vehemence, that the laws of the country require that the fires shall be extinguished in the houses while it lasts, and the night watches are doubled. The inhabitants lay heavy stones upon the roofs of their houses, to prevent their being blown away.

And the lake eddies up from all its depths!
Right gladly would I save the worthy man,
But 'tis impossible, as you must see.

BAUM. *(still kneeling)* Then I must fall into the tyrant's hands,
And with the shore of safety close in sight!
Yonder it lies! My eyes can see it clear,
My very voice can echo to its shores.
There is the boat to carry me across,
Yet must I lie here helpless and forlorn.

KUONI. Look! who comes here?

RUODI. 'Tis Tell, ay, Tell, of Bürglen.[1]

[*Enter* TELL *with a crossbow.*

TELL. What man is he that here implores for aid?

KUONI. He is from Alzellen, and, to guard his honour
From touch of foulest shame, has slain the Wolfshot,
The imperial seneschal, who dwelt at Rossberg.
The viceroy's troopers are upon his heels;
He begs the ferryman to take him over,
But frightened at the storm he says he won't.

RUODI. Well, there is Tell can steer as well as I,
He'll be my judge, if it be possible.

[*Violent peals of thunder — the lake becomes more tempestuous.*

Am I to plunge into the jaws of hell?
I should be mad to dare the desperate act.

TELL. The brave man thinks upon himself the last.
Put trust in God, and help him in his need!

RUODI. Safe in the port, 'tis easy to advise.
There is the boat, and there the lake! Try you!

TELL. The lake may pity, but the viceroy never.
Come, risk it, man!

[1] Bürglen, the birthplace and residence of Tell. A chapel, erected in 1522, remains on the spot formerly occupied by his house.

SHEPHERD *and* HUNTSMAN. O save him! save him! save him!

RUODI. Though 'twere my brother, or my darling child,
I would not go. 'Tis Simon and Jude's day,
The lake is up, and calling for its victim.

TELL. Nought's to be done with idle talking here.
Each moment's precious; the man must be help'd,
Say, boatman, will you venture?

RUODI. No; not I.

TELL. In God's name, then, give me the boat! I will,
With my poor strength, see what is to be done!

KUONI. Ha, gallant Tell!

WERNI. That's like a huntsman true!

BAUM. You are my angel, my preserver, Tell.

TELL. I may preserve you from the viceroy's power,
But from the tempest's rage another must.
Yet better 'tis you fall into God's hands,
Than into those of men. [*To the herdsman.*
Herdsman, do thou
Console my wife if I should come to grief.
I could not choose but do as I have done.
[*He leaps into the boat.*

KUONI. (*to the fisherman*) A pretty man to keep a ferry, truly!
What Tell could risk, you dared not venture on.

RUODI. Far better men would never cope with Tell.
There's no two such as he 'mong all our hills.

WERNI. (*who has ascended a rock*) Now he is off. God help thee, gallant sailor!
Look how the little boat reels on the waves!

KUONI. (*on the shore*) There! they have swept clean over it. And now
'Tis out of sight. Yet stay, there 'tis again!
Stoutly he stems the breakers, noble fellow!

SEPPI. Here come the troopers hard as they can ride!

KUONI. Heavens! so they do! Why, that was help, indeed. [*Enter a troop of horsemen.*

FIRST H. Give up the murderer! You have him here!

SEC. H. This way he came! 'Tis useless to conceal him!

RUODI *and* KUONI. Whom do you mean?

FIRST H. (*discovering the boat*) The devil! What do I see?

WERNI. (*from above*) Is't he in yonder boat ye seek? Ride on,
If you lay to, you may o'ertake him yet.

SEC. H. Curse on you, he's escaped!

FIRST H. (*to the shepherd and fisherman*) You help'd him off,
And you shall pay for it! Fall on their herds!
Down with the cottage! burn it! beat it down!
[*They rush off.*

SEPPI. (*hurrying after them*) Oh, my poor lambs!

KUONI. (*following him*) Unhappy me, my herds!

WERNI. The tyrants!

RUODI. (*wringing his hands*) Righteous Heaven! Oh, when will come
Deliverance to this doom-devoted land?
[*Exeunt severally.*

SCENE II.

A lime-tree in front of STAUFFACHER'S *house at Steinen, in Schwytz, upon the public road, near a bridge.*

WERNER STAUFFACHER *and* PFEIFFER *of Lucerne enter into conversation.*

PFEIFF. Ay, ay, friend Stauffacher, as I have said,
Swear not to Austria, if you can help it.

Hold by the empire stoutly as of yore,
And God preserve you in your ancient freedom!
[*Presses his hand warmly and is going.*

STAUFF. Wait till my mistress comes. Now do! You are
My guest in Schwytz — I in Lucerne am yours.

PFEIFF. Thanks! thanks! But I must reach Gersau to-day.
Whatever grievances your rulers' pride
And grasping avarice may yet inflict,
Bear them in patience — soon a change may come.
Another emperor may mount the throne.
But Austria's once, and you are hers for ever. [*Exit.*

[STAUFFACHER *sits down sorrowfully upon a bench under the lime-tree. Gertrude, his wife, enters, and finds him in this posture. She places herself near him, and looks at him for some time in silence.*

GERT. So sad, my love! I scarcely know thee now.
For many a day in silence I have mark'd
A moody sorrow furrowing thy brow.
Some silent grief is weighing on thy heart.
Trust it to me. I am thy faithful wife,
And I demand my half of all thy cares.
[STAUFFACHER *gives her his hand and is silent.*
Tell me what can oppress thy spirits thus?
Thy toil is blest — the world goes well with thee —
Our barns are full — our cattle, many a score;
Our handsome team of well-fed horses, too,
Brought from the mountain pastures safely home,
To winter in their comfortable stalls.
There stands thy house — no nobleman's more fair!
'Tis newly built with timber of the best,
All grooved and fitted with the nicest skill;
Its many glistening windows tell of comfort!
'Tis quarter'd o'er with scutcheons of all hues,

And proverbs sage, which passing travellers
Linger to read, and ponder o'er their meaning.
STAUFF. The house is strongly built, and handsomely,
But, ah! the ground on which we built it quakes.
GERT. Tell me, dear Werner, what you mean by that?
STAUFF. No later gone than yesterday, I sat
Beneath this linden, thinking with delight
How fairly all was finished, when from Küssnacht
The viceroy and his men came riding by.
Before this house he halted in surprise:
At once I rose, and, as beseemed his rank,
Advanced respectfully to greet the lord
To whom the emperor delegates his power,
As judge supreme within our canton here.
"Who is the owner of this house?" he asked,
With mischief in his thoughts, for well he knew.
With prompt decision, thus I answered him:
"The emperor, your grace — my lord and yours,
And held by me in fief." On this he answered,
"I am the emperor's vice-regent here,
And will not that each peasant churl should build
At his own pleasure, bearing him as freely
As though he were the master in the land.
I shall make bold to put a stop to this!"
So saying, he, with menaces, rode off,
And left me musing with a heavy heart
On the fell purpose that his words betray'd.
GERT. My own dear lord and husband! Wilt thou take
A word of honest counsel from thy wife?
I boast to be the noble Iberg's child,
A man of wide experience. Many a time,
As we sat spinning in the winter nights,
My sisters and myself, the people's chiefs
Were wont to gather round our father's hearth,

To read the old imperial charters, and
To hold sage converse on the country's weal.
Then heedfully I listened, marking well
What now the wise man thought, the good man wished,
And garner'd up their wisdom in my heart.
Hear then, and mark me well; for thou wilt see
I long have known the grief that weighs thee down.
The viceroy hates thee, fain would injure thee,
For thou hast cross'd his wish to bend the Swiss
In homage to this upstart house of princes,
And kept them staunch, like their good sires of old,
In true allegiance to the empire. Say,
Is't not so, Werner? Tell me, am I wrong?

STAUFF. 'Tis even so. For this doth Gessler hate me.

GERT. He burns with envy, too, to see thee living
Happy and free on thine ancestral soil,
For he is landless. From the emperor's self
Thou hold'st in fief the lands thy fathers left thee.
There's not a prince i' the empire that can show
A better title to his heritage;
For thou hast over thee no lord but one,
And he the mightiest of all Christian kings.
Gessler, we know, is but a younger son,
His only wealth the knightly cloak he wears;
He therefore views an honest man's good fortune
With a malignant and a jealous eye.
Long has he sworn to compass thy destruction.
As yet thou art uninjured. Wilt thou wait
Till he may safely give his malice vent?
A wise man would anticipate the blow.

STAUFF. What's to be done?

GERT. Now hear what I advise.
Thou knowest well, how here with us in Schwytz
All worthy men are groaning underneath
This Gessler's grasping, grinding tyranny.

Doubt not the men of Unterwald as well,
And Uri, too, are chafing like ourselves,
At this oppressive and heart-wearying yoke.
For there, across the lake, the Landenberg
Wields the same iron rule as Gessler here —
No fishing-boat comes over to our side,
But brings the tidings of some new encroachment,
Some fresh outrage, more grievous than the last.
Then it were well that some of you — true men —
Men sound at heart, should secretly devise
How best to shake this hateful thraldom off.
Full sure I am that God would not desert you,
But lend His favour to the righteous cause.
Hast thou no friend in Uri, one to whom
Thou frankly may'st unbosom all thy thoughts?

STAUFF. I know full many a gallant fellow there,
And nobles, too, — great men, of high repute,
In whom I can repose unbounded trust. [*Rising.*
Wife! What a storm of wild and perilous thoughts
Hast thou stirr'd up within my tranquil breast!
The darkest musings of my bosom thou
Hast dragg'd to light, and placed them full before me
And what I scarce dared harbour e'en in thought,
Thou speakest plainly out with fearless tongue.
But hast thou weigh'd well what thou urgest thus?
Discord will come, and the fierce clang of arms,
To scare this valley's long unbroken peace,
If we, a feeble shepherd race, shall dare
Him to the fight that lords it o'er the world.
Ev'n now they only wait some fair pretext
For setting loose their savage warrior hordes,
To scourge and ravage this devoted land,
To lord it o'er us with the victor's rights,
And, 'neath the show of lawful chastisement,
Despoil us of our chartered liberties.

GERT. You, too, are men; can wield a battle-axe
As well as they. God ne'er deserts the brave.

STAUFF. Oh, wife! a horrid, ruthless fiend is war,
That smites at once the shepherd and his flock.
GERT. What e'er great Heaven inflicts, we must endure;
But wrong is what no noble heart will bear.
STAUFF. This house — thy pride — war, unrelenting war,
Will burn it down.
GERT. And did I think this heart
Enslaved and fettered to the things of earth,
With my own hand I'd hurl the kindling torch.
STAUFF. Thou hast faith in human kindness, wife; but war
Spares not the tender infant in its cradle.
GERT. There is a Friend to innocence in heaven.
Send your gaze forward, Werner — not behind.
STAUFF. We men may die like men, with sword in hand;
But oh, what fate, my Gertrude, may be thine?
GERT. None are so weak but one last choice is left.
A spring from yonder bridge and I am free!
STAUFF. (*embracing her*) Well may he fight for hearth and home, that clasps
A heart so rare as thine against his own!
What are the host of emperors to him?
Gertrude, farewell! I will to Uri straight.
There lives my worthy comrade, Walter Fürst;
His thoughts and mine upon these times are one.
There, too, resides the noble Banneret
Of Attinghaus. High though of blood he be,
He loves the people, honours their old customs.
With both of these I will take counsel, how
To rid us bravely of our country's foe.
Farewell! and while I am away, bear thou
A watchful eye in management at home.
The pilgrim journeying to the house of God,

And holy friar, collecting for his cloister,
To these give liberally from purse and garner.
Stauffacher's houes would not be hid. Right out
Upon the public way it stands, and offers
To all that pass a hospitable roof.
[*While they are retiring,* TELL *enters with* BAUMGARTEN.
TELL. Now, then, you have no further need of me.
Enter yon house. 'Tis Werner Stauffacher's,
A man that is a father to distress.
See, there he is, himself! Come, follow me.
[*They retire up. Scene changes.*

SCENE III.

A common near Altdorf. On an eminence in the background a castle in progress of erection, and so far advanced that the outline of the whole may be distinguished. The back part is finished: men are working at the front. Scaffolding, on which the workmen are going up and down. A slater is seen upon the highest part of the roof. All is bustle and activity.

TASKMASTER, MASON, WORKMEN *and* LABOURERS.

TASK. (*with a stick, urging on the workmen*) Up, up! You've rested long enough. To work!
The stones here! Now the mortar, and the lime!
And let his lordship see the work advanced,
When next he comes. These fellows crawl like snails!
[*To two labourers, with loads.*
What! call ye that a load? Go, double it.
Is this the way ye earn your wages, laggards?
FIRST W. 'Tis very hard that we must bear the stones,
To make a keep and dungeon for ourselves!

TASK. What's that you mutter? 'Tis a worthless race,
For nothing fit but just to milk their cows,
And saunter idly up and down the hills.
OLD MAN. (*sinks down exhausted*) I can no more.
TASK. (*shaking him*) Up, up, old man, to work!
FIRST W. Have you no bowels of compassion, thus
To press so hard upon a poor old man,
That scarce can drag his feeble limbs along?
MASTER MASON *and* WORKMEN. Shame, shame upon you — shame! It cries to heaven.
TASK. Mind your own business. I but do my duty.
FIRST W. Pray, master, what's to be the name of this
Same castle, when 'tis built?
TASK. The Keep of Uri;
For by it we shall keep you in subjection.
WORK. The Keep of Uri?
TASK. Well, why laugh at that?
SEC. W. Keep Uri, will you, with this paltry place!
FIRST W. How many molehills such as that must first
Be piled up each on each, ere you make
A mountain equal to the least in Uri?
[TASKMASTER *retires up the stage.*
MAS. M. I'll drown the mallet in the deepest lake
That served my hand on this accursed pile.
[*Enter* TELL *and* STAUFFACHER.
STAUFF. Oh, that I had not lived to see this sight!
TELL. Here 'tis not good to be. Let us proceed.
STAUFF. Am I in Uri, — Uri, freedom's home?
MAS. M. Oh, sir, if you could only see the vaults
Beneath these towers. The man that tenants them
Will ne'er hear cock crow more.
STAUFF. O God! O God!
MASON. Look at these ramparts and these buttresses,
That seem as they were built to last for ever.

TELL. What hands have built, my friend, hands can destroy. [*Pointing to the mountains.*
That home of freedom God hath built for us.

[*A drum is heard. People enter bearing a cap upon a pole, followed by a crier. Women and children thronging tumultuously after them.*

FIRST W. What means the drum? Give heed!
MASON. Why, here's a mumming!
And look, the cap — what can they mean by that?
CRIER. In the emperor's name, give ear!
WORK. Hush! silence! hush!
CRIER. Ye men of Uri, ye do see this cap!
It will be set upon a lofty pole
In Altdorf, in the market-place: and this
Is the lord governor's good will and pleasure;
The cap shall have like honour as himself,
All do it reverence with bended knee,
And head uncovered; thus the king will know
Who are his true and loyal subjects here;
His life and goods are forfeit to the crown
That shall refuse obedience to the order.

[*The people burst out into laughter. The drum beats and the procession passes on.*

FIRST W. A strange device to fall upon indeed:
Do reverence to a cap! A pretty farce!
Heard ever mortal anything like this?
MAS. M. Down to a cap on bended knee, forsooth!
Rare jesting this with men of sober sense!
FIRST W. Nay, an it were the imperial crown! A cap!
Merely the cap of Austria! I've seen it
Hanging above the throne in Gessler's hall.
MASON. The cap of Austria? Mark that! A snare
To get us into Austria's power, by Heaven!
WORK. No freeborn man will stoop to such disgrace.

MAS. M. Come — to our comrades, and advise with them! [*They retire up.*

TELL. (*to* STAUFFACHER) You see how matters stand. Farewell, my friend!

STAUFF. Whither away? Oh, leave us not so soon.

TELL. They look for me at home. So fare ye well.

STAUFF. My heart's so full, and has so much to tell you.

TELL. Words will not make a heart that's heavy light.

STAUFF. Yet words may possibly conduct to deeds.

TELL. Endure in silence! We can do no more.

STAUFF. But shall we bear what is not to be borne?

TELL. Impetuous rulers have the shortest reigns.
When the fierce Southwind rises from his chasms,
Men cover up their fires, the ships in haste
Make for the harbour, and the mighty spirit
Sweeps o'er the earth, and leaves no trace behind.
Let every man live quietly at home;
Peace to the peaceful rarely is denied.

STAUFF. And is it thus you view our grievances?

TELL. The serpent stings not till it is provoked.
Let them alone; they'll weary of themselves,
When they shall see we are not to be roused.

STAUFF. Much might be done — did we stand fast together.

TELL. When the ship founders, he will best escape
Who seeks no other's safety but his own.

STAUFF. And you desert the common cause so coldly?

TELL. A man can safely count but on himself!

STAUFF. Nay, even the weak grow strong by union.

TELL. But the strong man is strongest when alone.

STAUFF. So, then, your country cannot count on you
If in despair she rise against her foes.

TELL. Tell rescues the lost sheep from yawning gulfs:

Is he a man, then, to desert his friends?
Yet, whatsoe'er you do, spare me from council!
I was not born to ponder and select;
But when your course of action is resolved,
Then call on Tell: you shall not find him fail.

[*Exeunt severally. A sudden tumult is heard around the scaffolding.*

MASON. (*running in*) What's wrong?

FIRST W. (*running forward*) The slater's fallen from the roof.

BERTHA. (*rushing in*) Heavens! Is he dashed to pieces? Save him, help!
If help be possible, save him! Here is gold.

[*Throws her trinkets among the people.*

MASON. Hence with your gold, — your universal charm,
And remedy for ill! When you have torn
Fathers from children, husbands from their wives,
And scattered woe and wail throughout the land,
You think with gold to compensate for all.
Hence! Till we saw you, we were happy men;
With you came misery and dark despair.

BERTHA. (*to the* TASKMASTER, *who has returned*) Lives he? [TASKMASTER *shakes his head.*
Ill-omened towers, with curses built,
And doomed with curses to be tenanted! [*Exit.*

SCENE IV.

The House of WALTER FÜRST. WALTER FURST *and* ARNOLD VON MELCHTHAL *enter simultaneously at different sides.*

MELCH. Good Walter Fürst.

FÜRST. If we should be surprised!
Stay where you are. We are beset with spies.

MELCH. Have you no news for me from Unterwald?

What of my father? 'Tis not to be borne,
Thus to be pent up like a felon here!
What have I done so heinous that I must
Skulk here in hiding, like a murderer?
I only laid my staff across the fists
Of the pert varlet, when, before my eyes,
By order of the governor, he tried
To drive away my handsome team of oxen.

FÜRST. You are too rash by far. He did no more
Than what the governor had ordered him.
You had transgress'd, and therefore should have paid
The penalty, however hard, in silence.

MELCH. Was I to brook the fellow's saucy gibe,
"That if the peasant must have bread to eat,
Why, let him go and draw the plough himself!"
It cut me to the very soul to see
My oxen, noble creatures, when the knave
Unyoked them from the plough. As though they felt
The wrong, they lowed and butted with their horns.
On this I could contain myself no longer,
And, overcome by passion, struck him down.

FÜRST. O, we old men can scarce command ourselves!
And can we wonder youth breaks out of bounds?

MELCH. I'm only sorry for my father's sake!
To be away from him, that needs so much
My fostering care! The governor detests him,
Because, whene'er occasion served, he has
Stood stoutly up for right and liberty.
Therefore they'll bear him hard — the poor old man!
And there is none to shield him from their gripe.
Come what come may, I must go home again.

FÜRST. Compose yourself, and wait in patience till
We get some tidings o'er from Unterwald.
Away! away! I hear a knock! Perhaps
A message from the viceroy! Get thee in!

You are not safe from Landenberger's[1] arm
In Uri, for these tyrants pull together.

MELCH. They teach us Switzers what *we* ought to do.

FÜRST. Away! I'll call you when the coast is clear. [MELCHTHAL *retires.*

Unhappy youth! I dare not tell him all
The evil that my boding heart predicts!
Who's there? The door ne'er opens, but I look
For tidings of mishap. Suspicion lurks
With darkling treachery in every nook.
Even to our inmost rooms they force their way,
These myrmidons of power; and soon we'll need
To fasten bolts and bars upon our doors.

[*He opens the door and steps back in surprise as* WERNER STAUFFACHER *enters.*

What do I see? You, Werner? Now, by Heaven!
A valued guest, indeed. No man e'er set
His foot across this threshold, more esteem'd.
Welcome! thrice welcome, Werner, to my roof!
What brings you here? What seek you here in Uri?

STAUFF. (*shakes* FÜRST *by the hand*) The olden times and olden Switzerland.

FÜRST. You bring them with you. See how glad I am,
My heart leaps at the very sight of you.
Sit down — sit down, and tell me how you left
Your charming wife, fair Gertrude? Iberg's child,
And clever as her father. Not a man,
That wends from Germany, by Meinrad's Cell,[2]
To Italy, but praises far and wide

[1] Berenger von Landenberg, a man of noble family in Thurgau, and Governor of Unterwald, infamous for his cruelties to the Swiss, and particularly to the venerable Henry of the Halden. He was slain at the battle of Morgarten, in 1315.

[2] A cell built in the 9th century, by Meinrad, Count of Hohenzollern, the founder of the Convent of Einsiedeln, subsequently alluded to in the text.

Your house's hospitality. But say,
Have you come here direct from Flüelen,
And have you noticed nothing on your way,
Before you halted at my door?

STAUFF. *(sits down.)* I saw
A work in progress, as I came along.
I little thought to see — that likes me ill.

FÜRST. O friend! you've lighted on my thought at once.

STAUFF. Such things in Uri ne'er were know before.
Never was prison here in man's remembrance,
Nor ever any stronghold but the grave.

FÜRST. You name it well. It is the grave of freedom.

STAUFF. Friend, Walter Fürst, I will be plain with you.
No idle curiosity it is
That brings me here, but heavy cares. I left
Thraldom at home, and thraldom meets me here.
Our wrongs, e'en now, are more than we can bear,
And who shall tell us where they are to end?
From eldest time the Switzer has been free,
Accustom'd only to the mildest rule.
Such things as now we suffer ne'er were known,
Since herdsman first drove cattle to the hills.

FÜRST. Yes, our oppressions are unparallel'd!
Why, even our own good lord of Attinghaus,
Who lived in olden times, himself declares
They are no longer to be tamely borne.

STAUFF. In Unterwalden yonder 'tis the same;
And bloody has the retribution been.
The imperial seneschal, the Wolfshot, who
At Rossberg dwelt, long'd for forbidden fruit —
Baumgarten's wife, that lives at Alzellen,
He tried to make a victim to his lust,
On which the husband slew him with his axe.

FÜRST. O, Heaven is just in all its judgments still!

Baumgarten, say you? A most worthy man.
Has he escaped, and is he safely hid?

STAUFF. Your son-in-law conveyed him o'er the lake,
And he lies hidden in my house at Steinen.
He brought the tidings with him of a thing
That has been done at Sarnen, worse than all,
A thing to make the very heart run blood!

FÜRST. (*attentively*) Say on. What is it?

STAUFF. There dwells in Melchthal then,
Just as you enter by the road from Kerns,
An upright man, named Henry of the Halden,
A man of weight and influence in the Diet.

FÜRST. Who knows him not? But what of him? Proceed.

STAUFF. The Landenberg, to punish some offence
Committed by the old man's son, it seems,
Had given command to take the youth's best pair
Of oxen from his plough; on which the lad
Struck down the messenger and took to flight.

FÜRST. But the old father — tell me, what of him?

STAUFF. The Landenberg sent for him, and required
He should produce his son upon the spot;
And when the old man protested, and with truth,
That he knew nothing of the fugitive,
The tyrant call'd his torturers.

FÜRST. (*springs up and tries to lead him to the other side*) Hush, no more!

STAUFF. (*with increasing warmth*) "And though thy son," he cried, "has 'scaped me now,
I have thee fast, and thou shalt feel my vengeance."
With that they flung the old man to the ground,
And plunged the pointed steel into his eyes.

FÜRST. Merciful Heaven!

MELCH. (*rushing out*) Into his eyes, his eyes?

STAUFF. (*addresses himself in astonishment to* WALTER FÜRST) Who is this youth?

MELCH. (*grasping him convulsively*) Into his eyes? Speak, speak!
FÜRST. Oh, miserable hour!
STAUFF. Who is it, tell me?
[STAUFFACHER *makes a sign to him.*
It is his son! All-righteous Heaven!
MELCH. And I
Must be from thence! What! into both his eyes?
FÜRST. Be calm, be calm; and bear it like a man!
MELCH. And all for me — for my mad wilful folly!
Blind, did you say? Quite blind — and both his eyes?
STAUFF. Ev'n so. The fountain of his sight is quench'd,
He ne'er will see the blessed sunshine more.
FÜRST. Oh, spare his anguish!
MELCH. Never, never more!
[*Presses his hands upon his eyes and is silent for some moments; then turning from one to the other speaks in a subdued tone, broken by sobs.*
O the eye's light, of all the gifts of Heaven,
The dearest, best! From light all beings live —
Each fair created thing — the very plants
Turn with a joyful transport to the light,
And he — he must drag on through all his days
In endless darkness! Never more for him
The sunny meads shall glow, the flow'rets bloom;
Nor shall he more behold the roseate tints
Of the iced mountain top! To die is nothing.
But to have life, and not have sight, — oh, that
Is misery indeed! Why do you look
So piteously at me? I have two eyes,
Yet to my poor blind father can give neither!
No, not one gleam of that great sea of light,
That with its dazzling splendour floods my gaze.
STAUFF. Ah, I must swell the measure of your grief,

Instead of soothing it. The worst, alas!
Remains to tell. They've stripp'd him of his all;
Nought have they left him, save his staff, on which,
Blind, and in rags, he moves from door to door.

MELCH. Nought but his staff to the old eyeless man!
Stripp'd of his all — even of the light of day,
The common blessing of the meanest wretch?
Tell me no more of patience, of concealment!
Oh, what a base and coward thing am I,
That on mine own security I thought,
And took no care of thine! Thy precious head
Left as a pledge within the tyrant's grasp!
Hence, craven-hearted prudence, hence! And all
My thoughts be vengeance, and the despot's blood!
I'll seek him straight — no power shall stay me now —
And at his hands demand my father's eyes.
I'll beard him 'mid a thousand myrmidons!
What's life to me, if in his heart's best blood
I cool the fever of this mighty anguish. [*He is going.*

FÜRST. Stay, this is madness, Melchthal! What avails
Your single arm against his power? He sits
At Sarnen high within his lordly keep,
And, safe within its battlemented walls,
May laugh to scorn your unavailing rage.

MELCH. And though he sat within the icy domes
Of yon far Schreckhorn — ay, or higher, where,
Veil'd since eternity, the Jungfrau soars,
Still to the tyrant would I make my way;
With twenty comrades minded like myself,
I'd lay his fastness level with the earth!
And if none follow me, and if you all,
In terror for your homesteads and your herds,
Bow in submission to the tyrant's yoke,
Round me I'll call the herdsmen on the hills,
And there beneath heaven's free and boundless roof,

Where men still feel as men, and hearts are true,
Proclaim aloud this foul enormity!

STAUFF. (*to* FÜRST) The measure's full — and are we then to wait
Till some extremity —

MELCH. Peace! What extremity
Remains for us to dread? What, when our eyes
No longer in their sockets are secure?
Heavens! Are we helpless? Wherefore did we learn
To bend the cross-bow, — wield the battle-axe?
What living creature but in its despair,
Finds for itself a weapon of defence?
The baited stag will turn, and with the show
Of his dread antlers hold the hounds at bay;
The chamois drags the huntsman down th' abyss,
The very ox, the partner of man's toil,
The sharer of his roof, that meekly bends
The strength of his huge neck beneath the yoke,
Springs up, if he's provoked, whets his strong horn,
And tosses his tormentor to the clouds.

FÜRST. If the three cantons thought as we three do,
Something might, then, be done, with good effect.

STAUFF. When Uri calls, when Unterwald replies,
Schwytz will be mindful of her ancient league.[1]

[1] The League, or Bond, of the Three Cantons was of very ancient origin. They met and renewed it from time to time, especially when their liberties were threatened with danger. A remarkable instance of this occurred in the end of the 13th century, when Albert, of Austria, became emperor, and when, possibly, for the first time, the bond was reduced to writing. As it is important to the understanding of many passages of the play, a translation is subjoined of the oldest known document relating to it. The original, which is in Latin and German, is dated in August, 1291, and is under the seals of the whole of the men of Schwytz, the commonalty of the vale of Uri and the whole of the men of the upper and lower vales of Stanz.

THE BOND.

Be it known to every one, that the men of the Dale of Uri, the Community of Schwytz, as also the men of the mountains of

MELCH. I've many friends in Unterwald, and none
That would not gladly venture life and limb,
If fairly back'd and aided by the rest.
Oh! sage and reverend fathers of this land,
Here do I stand before your riper years,
An unskill'd youth, who in the Diet must
Into respectful silence hush his voice.
Yet do not, for that I am young, and want
Experience, slight my counsel and my words.
'Tis not the wantonness of youthful blood
That fires my spirit; but a pang so deep
That e'en the flinty rocks must pity me.
You, too, are fathers, heads of families,
And you must wish to have a virtuous son
To reverence your gray hairs, and shield your eyes
With pious and affectionate regard.

Unterwald, in consideration of the evil times, have full confidently bound themselves, and sworn to help each other with all their power and might, property and people, against all who shall do violence to them, or any of them. That is our Ancient Bond.

Whoever hath a Seignoir, let him obey according to the conditions of his service.

We are agreed to receive into these dales no Judge, who is not a countryman and indweller, or who hath bought his place.

Every controversy amongst the sworn confederates shall be determined by some of the sagest of their number, and if any one shall challenge their judgment, then shall he be constrained to obey it by the rest.

Whoever intentionally or deceitfully kills another, shall be executed, and whoever shelters him shall be banished.

Whoever burns the property of another shall no longer be regarded as a countryman, and whoever shelters him shall make good the damage done.

Whoever injures another, or robs him, and hath property in our country, shall make satisfaction out of the same.

No one shall distrain a debtor without a judge, nor any one who is not his debtor, or the surety for such debtor.

Every one in these dales shall submit to the judge, or we, the sworn confederates, all will take satisfaction for all the injury occasioned by his contumacy. And if in any internal division the one party will not accept justice, all the rest shall help the other party. These decrees shall, God willing, endure eternally for our general advantage.

Do not, I pray, because in limb and fortune
You still are unassail'd, and still your eyes
Revolve undimm'd and sparkling in their spheres;
Oh, do not, therefore, disregard our wrongs!
Above you, also, hangs the tyrant's sword.
You, too, have striven to alienate the land
From Austria. This was all my father's crime:
You share his guilt, and may his punishment.

STAUFF. (*to* FÜRST) Do thou resolve! I am prepared to follow.

FÜRST. First let us learn what steps the noble lords
Von Sillinen and Attinghaus propose.
Their names would rally thousands to the cause.

MELCH. Is there a name within the Forest Mountains
That carries more respect than yours — and yours?
On names like these the people build their trust
In time of need — such names are household words.
Rich was your heritage of manly worth,
And richly have you added to its stores.
What need of nobles? Let us do the work
Ourselves. Yes, though we have to stand alone,
We shall be able to maintain our rights.

STAUFF. The nobles' wrongs are not so great as ours.
The torrent, that lays waste the lower grounds,
Hath not ascended to the uplands yet.
But let them see the country once in arms,
They'll not refuse to lend a helping hand.

FÜRST. Were there an umpire 'twixt ourselves and Austria,
Justice and law might then decide our quarrel.
But our oppressor is our emperor too,
And judge supreme. 'Tis God must help us, then,
And our own arm! Be yours the task to rouse
The men of Schwytz; I'll rally friends in Uri.

But whom are we to send to Unterwald?

MELCH. Thither send me. Whom should it more concern?

FÜRST. No, Melchthal, no; you are my guest, and I must answer for your safety.

MELCH. Let me go.
I know each forest track and mountain path;
Friends, too, I'll find, be sure, on every hand,
To give me willing shelter from the foe.

STAUFF. Nay, let him go; no traitors harbour there:
For tyranny is so abhorred in Unterwald,
No tools can there be found to work her will.
In the low valleys, too, the Alzeller
Will gain confederates, and rouse the country.

MELCH. But how shall we communicate, and not
Awaken the suspicion of the tyrants?

STAUFF. Might we not meet at Brunnen or at Treib,
Where merchant vessels with their cargoes come?

FÜRST. We must not go so openly to work.
Hear my opinion. On the lake's left bank,
As we sail hence to Brunnen, right against
The Mytenstein, deep-hidden in the wood
A meadow lies, by shepherds called the Rootli,
Because the wood has been uprooted there.
'Tis where our canton bound'ries verge on yours;—
[*To* MELCHTHAL.
Your boat will carry you across from Schwytz.
[*To* STAUFFACHER.
Thither by lonely by-paths let us wend
At midnight, and deliberate o'er our plans.
Let each bring with him there ten trusty men,
All one at heart with us; and then we may
Consult together for the general weal,
And, with God's guidance, fix what next to do.

STAUFF. So let it be. And now your true right hand!

Yours, too, young man! and as we now three men
Among ourselves thus knit our hands together
In all sincerity and truth, e'en so
Shall we three cantons, too, together stand
In victory and defeat, in life and death.

FÜRST *and* MELCH. In life and death.

[*They hold their hands clasped together for some moments in silence.*

MELCH. Alas, my old blind father!
The day of freedom, that thou canst not see,
But thou shalt hear it, when from Alp to Alp
The beacon fires throw up their flaming signs,
And the proud castles of the tyrants fall,
Into thy cottage shall the Switzer burst,
Bear the glad tidings to thine ear, and o'er
Thy darken'd way shall Freedom's radiance pour.

ACT II.

SCENE I.

The mansion of the BARON OF ATTINGHAUSEN. *A Gothic Hall decorated with escutcheons and helmets. The* BARON, *a gray-headed man, eighty-five years old, tall and of a commanding mien, clad in a furred pelisse, and leaning on a staff tipped with chamois horn.* KUONI *and six hinds standing around him with rakes and scythes.* ULRICH OF RUDENZ *enters in the costume of a Knight.*

RUD. Uncle, I'm here! Your will?

ATTING. First let me share,
After the ancient custom of our house,
The morning cup with these my faithful servants!

[*He drinks from a cup, which is then passed around.*

Time was, I stood myself in field and wood,

With mine own eyes directing all their toil,
Even as my banner led them in the fight.
Now I am only fit to play the steward:
And, if the genial sun come not to me,
I can no longer seek it on the hills.
Thus slowly, in an ever narrowing sphere,
I move on to the narrowest and the last,
Where all life's pulses cease. I now am but
The shadow of my former self, and that
Is fading fast — 'twill soon be but a name.

KUONI. (*offering* RUDENZ *the cup*) A pledge, young master!

[RUDENZ *hesitates to take the cup.*

Nay, sir, drink it off!
One cup, one heart! You know our proverb, sir?

ATTING. Go, children, and at eve, when work is done,
We'll meet and talk the country's business over.

[*Exeunt Servants.*

Belted and plumed, and all thy bravery on!
Thou art for Altdorf — for the castle, boy?

RUD. Yes, uncle. Longer may I not delay —

ATTING. (*sitting down*) Why in such haste? Say, are thy youthful hours
Doled in such niggard measure, that thou must
Be chary of them to thy aged uncle?

RUD. I see my presence is not needed here,
I am but as a stranger in this house.

ATTING. (*gazes fixedly at him for a considerable time*) Ay, pity 'tis thou art! Alas, that home
To thee has grown so strange! Oh, Uly! Uly!
I scarce do know thee now, thus deck'd in silks,
The peacock's feather[1] flaunting in thy cap,

[1] The Austrian knights were in the habit of wearing a plume of peacock's feathers in their helmets. After the overthrow of the Austrian dominion in Switzerland, it was made highly penal to wear the peacock's feather at any public assembly there.

And purple mantle round thy shoulders flung:
Thou look'st upon the peasant with disdain;
And tak'st his honest greeting with a blush.
RUD. All honour due to him I gladly pay,
But must deny the right he would usurp.
ATTING. The sore displeasure of its monarch rests
Upon our land, and every true man's heart
Is full of sadness for the grievous wrongs
We suffer from our tyrants. Thou alone
Art all unmoved amid the general grief.
Abandoning thy friends, thou tak'st thy stand
Beside thy country's foes, and, as in scorn
Of our distress, pursuest giddy joys,
Courting the smiles of princes all the while
Thy country bleeds beneath their cruel scourge.
RUD. The land is sore oppress'd, I know it, uncle.
But why? Who plunged it into this distress?
A word, one little easy word, might buy
Instant deliverance from all our ills,
And win the good will of the emperor.
Woe unto those who seal the people's eyes,
And made them adverse to their country's good —
The men, who, for their own vile selfish ends,
Are seeking to prevent the Forest States
From swearing fealty to Austria's house,
As all the countries round about have done.
It fits their humour well, to take their seats
Amid the nobles on the Herrenbank;[1]
They'll have the Kaiser for their lord, forsooth, —
That is to say, they'll have no lord at all.
ATTING. Must I hear this, and from thy lips, rash boy!
RUD. You urged me to this answer. Hear me out.
What, uncle, is the character you've stoop'd
To fill contentedly through life? Have you
No higher pride, than in these lonely wilds

[1] The bench reserved for the nobility.

To be the Landamman or Banneret,[1]
The petty chieftain of a shepherd race?
How! Were it not a far more glorious choice,
To bend in homage to our royal lord,
And swell the princely splendours of his court,
Than sit at home, the peer of your own vassals,
And share the judgment-seat with vulgar clowns?

ATTING. Ah, Uly, Uly; all too well I see
The tempter's voice has caught thy willing ear,
And pour'd its subtle poison in thy heart.

RUD. Yes, I conceal it not. It doth offend
My inmost soul, to hear the stranger's gibes,
That taunt us with the name of "Peasant Nobles!"
Think you the heart that's stirring here can brook,
While all the young nobility around
Are reaping honour under Habsburg's banner,
That I should loiter, in inglorious ease,
Here on the heritage my fathers left,
And, in the dull routine of vulgar toil,
Lose all life's glorious spring? In other lands
Great deeds are done. A world of fair renown
Beyond these mountains stirs in martial pomp.
My helm and shield are rusting in the hall;
The martial trumpet's spirit-stirring blast,
The herald's call, inviting to the lists,
Rouse not the echoes of these vales, where nought
Save cowherd's horn and cattle bell is heard,
In one unvarying dull monotony.

ATTING. Deluded boy, seduced by empty show!
Despise the land that gave thee birth! Ashamed
Of the good ancient customs of thy sires!
The day will come, when thou, with burning tears,
Wilt long for home, and for thy native hills,

[1] The Landamman was an officer chosen by the Swiss Gemeinde, or Diet, to preside over them. The Banneret was an officer entrusted with the keeping of the State Banner, and such others as were taken in battle.

And that dear melody of tuneful herds,
Which now, in proud disgust, thou dost despise!
A day when wistful pangs shall shake thy heart,
Hearing their music in a foreign land.
Oh! potent is the spell that binds to home!
No, no, the cold, false world is not for thee.
At the proud court, with thy true heart, thou wilt
For ever feel a stranger among strangers.
The world asks virtues of far other stamp
Than thou hast learned within these simple vales.
But go — go thither, — barter thy free soul,
Take land in fief, be minion to a prince,
Where thou might'st be lord paramount, and prince
Of all thine own unburden'd heritage!
O, Uly, Uly, stay among thy people!
Go not to Altdorf. Oh, abandon not
The sacred cause of thy wrong'd native land!
I am the last of all my race. My name
Ends with me. Yonder hang my helm and shield;
They will be buried with me in the grave.[1]
And must I think, when yielding up my breath,
That thou but wait'st the closing of mine eyes,
To stoop thy knee to this new feudal court,
And take in vassalage from Austria's hands
The noble lands, which I from God received,
Free and unfetter'd as the mountain air!

RUD. 'Tis vain for us to strive against the king.
The world pertains to him: — shall we alone,
In mad presumptuous obstinacy, strive
To break that mighty chain of lands, which he
Hath drawn around us with his giant grasp.
His are the markets, his the courts, — his, too,
The highways; nay, the very carrier's horse,
That traffics on the Gotthardt, pays him toll.

[1] According to the custom, by which, when the last male descendant of a noble family died, his sword, helmet, and shield, were buried with him.

By his dominions, as within a net,
We are enclosed, and girded round about.
— And will the empire shield us? Say, can it
Protect itself 'gainst Austria's growing power?
To God, and not to emperors must we look!
What store can on their promises be placed,
When they, to meet their own necessities,
Can pawn, and even alienate the towns
That flee for shelter 'neath the eagle's wings?[1]
No, uncle! It is wise and wholesome prudence,
In times like these, when faction's all abroad,
To vow attachment to some mighty chief.
The imperial crown's transferred from line to line.[2]
It has no memory for faithful service:
But to secure the favour of these great
Hereditary masters, were to sow
Seeds for a future harvest.

ATTING. Art so wise?
Wilt thou see clearer than thy noble sires,
Who battled for fair freedom's priceless gem,
With life, and fortune, and heroic arm?
Sail down the lake to Lucern, there inquire,
How Austria's thraldom weighs the cantons down.
Soon she will come to count our sheep, our cattle,
To portion out the Alps, e'en to their peaks,
And in our own free woods to hinder us
From striking down the eagle or the stag;
To set her tolls on every bridge and gate,
Impoverish us, to swell her lust of sway,
And drain our dearest blood to feed her wars.
No, if our blood must flow, let it be shed
In our own cause! We purchase liberty

[1] This frequently occurred. But in the event of an imperial city being mortgaged for the purpose of raising money, it lost its freedom, and was considered as put out of the realm.

[2] An allusion to the circumstance of the imperial crown not being hereditary, but conferred by election on one of the counts of the empire.

More cheaply far than bondage.

RUD. What can we,
A shepherd race, against great Albert's hosts?

ATTING. Learn, foolish boy, to know this shepherd race!
I know them, I have led them on in fight, —
I saw them in the battle at Favenz.
What! Austria try, forsooth, to force on us
A yoke we are determined not to bear!
Oh, learn to feel from what a stock thou'rt sprung;
Cast not, for tinsel trash and idle show,
The precious jewel of thy worth away.
To be the chieftain of a free born race,
Bound to thee only by their unbought love,
Ready to stand — to fight — to die with thee,
Be that thy pride, be that thy noblest boast!
Knit to thy heart the ties of kindred — home —
Cling to the land, the dear land of thy sires,
Grapple to that with thy whole heart and soul!
Thy power is rooted deep and strongly here,
But in yon stranger world thou'lt stand alone,
A trembling reed beat down by every blast.
Oh come! 'tis long since we have seen thee, Uly!
Tarry but this one day. Only to-day!
Go not to Altdorf. Wilt thou? Not to-day!
For this one day, bestow thee on thy friends.
[*Takes his hand.*

RUD. I gave my word. Unhand me! I am bound.

ATTING. (*drops his hand and says sternly*) Bound, didst thou say? Oh, yes, unhappy boy,
Thou art indeed. But not by word or oath.
'Tis by the silken mesh of love thou'rt bound.
[RUDENZ *turns away.*
Ay, hide thee, as thou wilt. 'Tis she, I know,
Bertha of Bruneck, draws thee to the court;
'Tis she that chains thee to the emperor's service.
Thou think'st to win the noble knightly maid

By thy apostasy. Be not deceived.
She is held out before thee as a lure;
But never meant for innocence like thine.

RUD. No more, I've heard enough. So fare you well. [*Exit.*

ATTING. Stay, Uly! Stay! Rash boy, he's gone! I can
Nor hold him back, nor save him from destruction.
And so the Wolfshot has deserted us;—
Others will follow his example soon.
This foreign witchery, sweeping o'er our hills,
Tears with its potent spell our youth away.
O luckless hour, when men and manners strange
Into these calm and happy valleys came,
To warp our primitive and guileless ways.
The new is pressing on with might. The old,
The good, the simple, all fleet fast away.
New times come on. A race is springing up,
That think not as their fathers thought before!
What do I hear? All, all are in the grave
With whom erewhile I moved, and held converse;
My age has long been laid beneath the sod:
Happy the man, who may not live to see
What shall be done by those that follow me!

Scene II.

A meadow surrounded by high rocks and wooded ground. On the rocks are tracks, with rails and ladders, by which the peasants are afterward seen descending. In the background the lake is observed, and over it a moon rainbow in the early part of the scene. The prospect is closed by lofty mountains, with glaciers rising behind them. The stage is dark, but the lake and glaciers glisten in the moonlight.

Melchthal, Baumgarten, Winkelried, Meyer von Sarnen, Burkhart am Buhel, Arnold von Sewa, Klaus von der Flue, *and four other peasants, all armed.*

Melch. (*behind the scenes*) The mountain pass is open. Follow me!
I see the rock, and little cross upon it:
This is the spot; here is the Rootli.
[*They enter with torches.*
Wink. Hark!
Sewa. The coast is clear.
Meyer. None of our comrades come?
We are the first, we Unterwaldeners.
Melch. How far is't i' the night?
Baum. The beacon watch
Upon the Selisberg has just called two.
[*A bell is heard at a distance.*
Meyer. Hush! Hark!
Buhel. The forest chapel's matin bell
Chimes clearly o'er the lake from Switzerland.
Von F. The air is clear, and bears the sound so far.
Melch. Go, you and you, and light some broken boughs,
Let's bid them welcome with a cheerful blaze.
[*Two peasants exeunt.*

SEWA. The moon shines fair to-night. Beneath its beams
The lake reposes, bright as burnish'd steel.
BUHEL. They'll have an easy passage.
WINK. (*pointing to the lake*) Ha! look there!
Do you see nothing?
MEYER. Ay, indeed, I do!
A rainbow in the middle of the night.
MELCH. Formed by the bright reflection of the moon!
VON F. A sign most strange and wonderful, indeed!
Many there be, who ne'er have seen the like.
SEWA. 'Tis doubled, see, a paler one above!
BAUM. A boat is gliding yonder right beneath it.
MELCH. That must be Werner Stauffacher! I knew
The worthy patriot would not tarry long.
[*Goes with* BAUMGARTEN *toward the shore.*
MEYER. The Uri men are like to be the last.
BUHEL. They're forced to take a winding circuit through
The mountains; for the viceroy's spies are out.
[*In the meanwhile the two peasants have kindled a fire in the centre of the stage.*
MELCH. (*on the shore*) Who's there? The word?
STAUFF. (*from below*) Friends of the country.
[*All retire up the stage, toward the party landing from the boat. Enter* STAUFFACHER, ITEL REDING, HANS AUF DER MAUER, JORG IM HOFE, CONRAD HUNN, ULRICH DER SCHMIDT, JOST VON WEILER, *and three other peasants, armed.*
ALL. Welcome!
[*While the rest remain behind exchanging greetings,* MELCHTHAL *comes forward with* STAUFFACHER.
MELCH. Oh, worthy Stauffacher, I've look'd but now
On him who could not look on me again.

I've laid my hands upon his rayless eyes,
And on their vacant orbits sworn a vow
Of vengeance, only to be cool'd in blood.

STAUFF. Speak not of vengeance. We are here to meet
The threatened evil, not to avenge the past.
Now tell me what you've done, and what secured
To aid the common cause in Unterwald.
How stand the peasantry disposed, and how
Yourself escaped the wiles of treachery?

MELCH. Through the Surenen's fearful mountain chain,
Where dreary ice-fields stretch on every side,
And sound is none, save the hoarse vulture's cry,
I reach'd the Alpine pasture, where the herds
From Uri and from Engelberg resort,
And turn their cattle forth to graze in common.
Still as I went along, I slaked my thirst
With the coarse oozings of the glacier heights
That thro' the crevices come foaming down,
And turned to rest me in the herdsmen's cots,[1]
Where I was host and guest, until I gain'd
The cheerful homes and social haunts of men.
Already through these distant vales had spread
The rumour of this last atrocity;
And wheresoe'er I went, at every door,
Kind words saluted me and gentle looks.
I found these simple spirits all in arms
Against our rulers' tyrannous encroachments.
For as their Alps through each succeeding year
Yield the same roots, — their streams flow ever on
In the same channels, — nay, the clouds and winds
The selfsame course unalterably pursue,

[1] These are the cots, or shealings, erected by the herdsmen for shelter, while pasturing their herds on the mountains during the summer. These are left deserted in winter, during which period Melchthal's journey was taken.

So have old customs there, from sire to son,
Been handed down, unchanging and unchanged;
Nor will they brook to swerve or turn aside
From the fixed even tenor of their life.
With grasp of their hard hands they welcomed me, —
Took from the walls their rusty falchions down, —
And from their eyes the soul of valour flash'd
With joyful lustre, as I spoke those names
Sacred to every peasant in the mountains,
Your own and Walter Fürst's. Whate'er your voice
Should dictate as the right, they swore to do;
And you they swore to follow e'en to death.
— So sped I on from house to house, secure
In the guest's sacred privilege; — and when
I reached at last the valley of my home,
Where dwell my kinsmen, scatter'd far and near —
And when I found my father, stript and blind,
Upon the stranger's straw, fed by the alms
Of charity —

STAUFF. Great Heaven!

MELCH. Yet wept I not!
No — not in weak and unavailing tears
Spent I the force of my fierce burning anguish;
Deep in my bosom, like some precious treasure,
I lock'd it fast, and thought on deeds alone.
Through every winding of the hills I crept, —
No valley so remote but I explored it;
Nay, at the very glacier's ice-clad base,
I sought and found the homes of living men;
And still, where'er my wandering footsteps turn'd,
The selfsame hatred of these tyrants met me.
For even there, at vegetation's verge,
Where the numb'd earth is barren of all fruits,
Their grasping hands had been for plunder thrust.
Into the hearts of all this honest race,
The story of my wrongs struck deep, and now
They, to a man, are ours; both heart and hand.

STAUFF. Great things, indeed, you've wrought in little time.

MELCH. I did still more than this. The fortresses,
Rossberg and Sarnen, are the country's dread;
For from behind their adamantine walls
The foe, like eagle from his eyrie, swoops,
And, safe himself, spreads havoc o'er the land.
With my own eyes I wish'd to weigh its strength,
So went to Sarnen, and explored the castle.

STAUFF. How! Venture even into the tiger's den?

MELCH. Disguished in pilgrim's weeds I entered it;
I saw the viceroy feasting at his board —
Judge if I'm master of myself or no!
I saw the tyrant, and I slew him not!

STAUFF. Fortune, indeed, upon your boldness smiled.

[*Meanwhile the others have arrived and join* MELCHTHAL *and* STAUFFACHER.

Yet tell me now, I pray, who are the friends,
The worthy men, who came along with you?
Make me acquainted with them, that we may
Speak frankly, man to man, and heart to heart.

MEYER. In the three cantons, who, sir, knows not you?
Meyer of Sarnen is my name; and this
Is Struth of Winkelried, my sister's son.

STAUFF. No unknown name. A Winkelried it was
Who slew the dragon in the fen at Weiler,
And lost his life in the encounter, too.

WINK. That, Master Stauffacher, was my grandfather.

MELCH. (*pointing to two peasants*) These two are men who till the cloister lands
Of Engelberg, and live behind the forest.
You'll not think ill of them because they're serfs,
And sit not free upon the soil, like us.
They love the land, and bear a good repute.

STAUFF. (*to them*) Give me your hands. He has good cause for thanks,
That to no man his body's service owes.
But worth is worth, no matter where 'tis found.
HUNN. That is Herr Reding, sir, our old Landamman.
MEYER. I know him well. I am at law with him
About a piece of ancient heritage.
Herr Reding, we are enemies in court,
Here we are one. [*Shakes his hand.*
STAUFF. That's well and bravely said.
WINK. Listen! They come. The horn of Uri! Hark!
[*On the right and left armed men are seen descending the rocks with torches.*
MAUER. Look, is not that the holy man of God?
A worthy priest! The terrors of the night,
And the way's pains and perils scare not him,
A faithful shepherd caring for his flock.
BAUM. The sacrist follows him, and Walter Fürst.
But where is Tell? I do not see him there.
[WALTER FÜRST, RÖSSELMANN *the Pastor*, PETERMANN *the Sacrist*, KUONI *the Shepherd*, WERNI *the Huntsman*, RUODI *the Fisherman, and five other countrymen, thirty-three in all, advance and take their places round the fire.*
FÜRST. Thus must we, on the soil our fathers left us,
Creep forth by stealth to meet like murderers,
And in the night, that should her mantle lend
Only to crime and black conspiracy,
Assert our own good rights, which yet are clear
As is the radiance of the noonday sun.
MELCH. So be it. What is hatch'd in gloom of night
Shall free and boldly meet the morning light.
RÖSSEL. Confederates! Listen to the words which God

Inspires my heart withal. Here we are met
To represent the general weal. In us
Are all the people of the land convened.
Then let us hold the Diet, as of old,
And as we're wont in peaceful times to do.
The time's necessity be our excuse,
If there be aught informal in this meeting.
Still, wheresoe'er men strike for justice, there
Is God, and now beneath his heav'n we stand.

STAUFF. 'Tis well advised. — Let us, then, hold the Diet
According to our ancient usages. —
Though it be night, there's sunshine in our cause.

MELCH. Few though our numbers be, the hearts are here
Of the whole people; here the BEST are met.

HUNN. The ancient books may not be near at hand,
Yet are they graven in our inmost hearts.

RÖSSEL. 'Tis well. And now, then, let a ring be formed,
And plant the swords of power within the ground.[1]

MAUER. Let the Landamman step into his place,
And by his side his secretaries stand.

SACRIST. There are three cantons here. Which hath the right
To give the head to the united council?

MELCH. Schwytz may contest that dignity with Uri.
We Unterwald'ners enter not the field,
We stand aside. We are but suppliants here,
Invoking aid from our more potent friends.

STAUFF. Let Uri have the sword. Her banner takes,
In battle, the precedence of our own.

FÜRST. Schwytz, then, must share the honour of the sword;

[1] It was the custom at the meetings of the Landes Gemeinde, or Diet, to set swords upright in the ground as emblems of authority.

For she's the honoured ancestor of all.

RÖSSEL. Let me arrange this generous controversy.
Uri shall lead in battle — Schwytz in council.

FÜRST (*gives* STAUFFACHER *his hand*) Then take your place.

STAUFF. Not I. Some older man.

HOFE. Ulrich, the smith, is the most aged here.

MAUER. A worthy man, but not a freeman; no!
— No bondman can be judge in Switzerland.

STAUFF. Is not Herr Reding here, our old Landamman?
Where can we find a worthier man than he?

FÜRST. Let him be Amman and the Diet's chief!
You that agree with me, hold up your hands!

[*All hold up their right hands.*

REDING. (*stepping into the centre*) I cannot lay my hands upon the books;
But by yon everlasting stars I swear
Never to swerve from justice and the right.

[*The two swords are placed before him, and a circle formed; Schwytz in the centre, Uri on his right, Unterwald on his left.*

REDING. (*resting on his battle sword*) Why, at the hour when spirits walk the earth,
Meet the three cantons of the mountains here,
Upon the lake's inhospitable shore?
What may the purport be of this new league
We here contract beneath the starry heaven?

STAUFF. (*entering the circle*) 'Tis no new league that here we now contract,
But one our fathers framed, in ancient times,
We purpose to renew! For know, confederates,
Though mountain ridge and lake divide our bounds,
And each canton by its own laws is ruled,
Yet are we but one race, born of one blood,
And all are children of one common home.

WINK. Is then the burden of our legends true,

That we came hither from a distant land ?
Oh, tell us what you know, that our new league
May reap fresh vigour from the leagues of old.

STAUFF. Hear, then, what aged herdsmen tell.
There dwelt
A mighty people in the land that lies
Back to the north. The scourge of famine came:
And in this strait 'twas publicly resolved
That each tenth man, on whom the lot might fall,
Should leave the country. They obey'd — and forth,
With loud lamentings, men and women went,
A mighty host; and to the south moved on,
Cutting their way through Germany by the sword,
Until they gained these pine-clad hills of ours;
Nor stopp'd they ever on their forward course,
Till at the shaggy dell they halted, where
The Müta flows through its luxuriant meads.
No trace of human creature met their eye,
Save one poor hut upon the desert shore,
Where dwelt a lonely man, and kept the ferry.
A tempest raged — the lake rose mountains high
And barr'd their further progress. Thereupon
They view'd the country — found it rich in wood,
Discover'd goodly springs, and felt as they
Were in their own dear native land once more.
Then they resolved to settle on the spot;
Erected there the ancient town of Schwytz:
And many a day of toil had they to clear
The tangled brake and forest's spreading roots.
Meanwhile their numbers grew, the soil became
Unequal to sustain them, and they cross'd
To the black mountain, far as Weissland, where,
Conceal'd behind eternal walls of ice,
Another people speak another tongue.
They built the village Stanz, beside the Kernwald;
The village Altdorf, in the vale of Reuss;
Yet, ever mindful of their parent stem,

The men of Schwytz, from all the stranger race,
That since that time have settled in the land,
Each other recognise. Their hearts still know,
And beat fraternally to kindred blood.
[*Extends his hand right and left.*

MAUER. Ay, we are all one heart, one blood, one race!

ALL. (*joining hands*) We are one people, and will act as one.

STAUFF. The nations round us bear a foreign yoke;
For they have to the conqueror succumbed.
Nay, e'en within our frontiers may be found
Some, that owe villein service to a lord,
A race of bonded serfs from sire to son.
But we, the genuine race of ancient Swiss,
Have kept our freedom from the first till now.
Never to princes have we bow'd the knee;
Freely we sought protection of the empire.

RÖSSEL. Freely we sought it — freely it was given.
'Tis so set down in Emperor Frederick's charter.

STAUFF. For the most free have still some feudal lord.
There must be still a chief, a judge supreme,
To whom appeal may lie, in case of strife.
And therefore was it, that our sires allow'd,
For what they had recover'd from the waste,
This honour to the emperor, the lord
Of all the German and Italian soil;
And, like the other free men of his realm,
Engaged to aid him with their swords in war;
The free man's duty this alone should be,
To guard the empire that keeps guard for him.

MELCH. He's but a slave that would acknowledge more.

STAUFF. They followed, when the Heribann[1] went forth,

[1] The Heribann was a muster of warriors similar to the *arrière ban* of France.

The imperial standard, and they fought its battles!
To Italy they march'd in arms, to place
The Cæsars' crown upon the emperor's head.
But still at home they ruled themselves in peace,
By their own laws and ancient usages.
The emperor's only right was to adjudge
The penalty of death; he therefore named
Some mighty noble as his delegate,
That had no stake or interest in the land,
Who was call'd in, when doom was to be pass'd,
And, in the face of day, pronounced decree,
Clear and distinctly, fearing no man's hate.
What traces here, that we are bondsmen? Speak,
If there be any can gainsay my words!

HOFE. No! You have spoken but the simple truth;
We never stoop'd beneath a tyrant's yoke.

STAUFF. Even to the emperor we did not submit,
When he gave judgment 'gainst us for the Church;
For when the Abbey of Einsiedlen claimed
The Alp our fathers and ourselves had grazed,
And showed an ancient charter, which bestowed
The land on them as being ownerless —
For our existence there had been concealed —
What was our answer? This. "The grant is void.
No emperor can bestow what is our own:
And if the empire shall deny our rights,
We can, within our mountains, right ourselves!"
Thus spake our fathers! And shall we endure
The shame and infamy of this new yoke,
And from the vassal brook what never king
Dared, in his plenitude of power, attempt?
This soil we have created for ourselves
By the hard labour of our hands; we've changed
The giant forest, that was erst the haunt
Of savage bears, into a home for man;

Extirpated the dragon's brood, that wont
To rise, distent with venom, from the swamps;
Rent the thick misty canopy that hung
Its blighting vapours on the dreary waste;
Blasted the solid rock; across the chasm
Thrown the firm bridge for the wayfaring man.
By the possession of a thousand years
The soil is ours. And shall an alien lord,
Himself a vassal, dare to venture here,
Insult us by our own hearth fires, — attempt
To forge the chains of bondage for our hands,
And do us shame on our own proper soil?
Is there no help against such wrong as this?
[*Great sensation among the people.*
Yes! there's a limit to the despot's power!
When the oppress'd for justice looks in vain,
When his sore burden may no more be borne,
With fearless heart he makes appeal to Heaven,
And thence brings down his everlasting rights,
Which there abide, inalienably his,
And indestructible as are the stars.
Nature's primeval state returns again,
Where man stands hostile to his fellow man;
And if all other means shall fail his need,
One last resource remains — his own good sword.
Our dearest treasures call to us for aid,
Against the oppressor's violence; we stand
For country, home, for wives, for children here!

ALL. (*clashing their swords*) Here stand we for our homes, our wives, and children.

RÖSSEL. (*stepping into the circle*) Bethink ye well before ye draw the sword.

Some peaceful compromise may yet be made;
Speak but one word, and at your feet you'll see
The men who now oppress you. Take the terms
That have been often tendered you; renounce
The empire, and to Austria swear allegiance!

MAUER. What says the priest? To Austria allegiance?
BUHEL. Hearken not to him!
WINK. 'Tis a traitor's counsel,
His country's foe!
REDING. Peace, peace, confederates!
SEWA. Homage to Austria, after wrongs like these!
FLUE. Shall Austria extort from us by force
What we denied to kindness and entreaty?
MEYER. Then should we all be slaves, deservedly.
MAUER. Yes! Let him forfeit all a Switzer's rights
Who talks of yielding thus to Austria's yoke!
I stand on this, Landamman. Let this be
The foremost of our laws!
MELCH. Even so! Whoe'er
Shall talk of bearing Austria's yoke, let him
Of all his rights and honours be despoiled,
No man thenceforth receive him at his hearth!
ALL. (*raising their right hands*) Agreed! Be this the law!
REDING. (*after a pause*) The law it is.
RÖSSEL. Now you are free — this law hath made you free.
Never shall Austria obtain by force
What she has fail'd to gain by friendly suit.
WEIL. On with the order of the day! Proceed!
REDING. Confederates! Have all gentler means been tried?
Perchance the emp'ror knows not of our wrongs,
It may not be his will we suffer thus:
Were it not well to make one last attempt,
And lay our grievances before the throne,
Ere we unsheathe the sword? Force is at best
A fearful thing e'en in a righteous cause;
God only helps, when man can help no more.
STAUFF. (*to* KONRAD HUNN) Here you can give us information. Speak!

HUNN. I was at Rheinfeld, at the emperor's court,
Deputed by the cantons to complain
Of the oppressions of these governors,
And of our liberties the charter claim,
Which each new king till now has ratified.
I found the envoys there of many a town,
From Suabia and the valley of the Rhine,
Who all received their parchments as they wish'd,
And straight went home again with merry heart.
But me, your envoy, they to the council sent,
Where I with empty cheer was soon dismiss'd.
"The emperor at present was engaged;
Some other time he would attend to us!"
I turn'd away, and passing through the hall,
With heavy heart, in a recess I saw
The Grand Duke John[1] in tears, and by his side
The noble lords of Wart and Tegerfeld,
Who beckon'd me, and said, "Redress yourselves.
Expect not justice from the emperor.
Does he not plunder his own brother's child,
And keep from him his just inheritance?"
The duke claims his maternal property,
Urging he's now of age, and 'tis full time,
That he should rule his people and estates;
What is the answer made to him? The king
Places a chaplet on his head; "Behold
The fitting ornament," he cries, "of youth!"

MAUER. You hear. Expect not from the emperor
Or right or justice! Then redress yourselves!

REDING. No other course is left us. Now, advise
What plan most likely to ensure success.

FÜRST. To shake a thraldom off that we abhor,
To keep our ancient rights inviolate,
As we received them from our fathers, — this,
Not lawless innovation, is our aim.

[1] The Duke of Suabia, who soon afterward assassinated his uncle, for withholding his patrimony from him.

Let Cæsar still retain what is his due:
And he that is a vassal, let him pay
The service he is sworn to faithfully.
MEYER. I hold my land of Austria in fief.
FÜRST. Continue, then, to pay your feudal dues.
WEIL. I'm tenant of the lords of Rappersweil.
FÜRST. Continue, then, to pay them rent and tithe.
RÖSSEL. Of Zurich's abbess humble vassal I.
FÜRST. Give to the cloister what the cloister claims.
STAUFF. The empire only is my feudal lord.
FÜRST. What needs must be, we'll do, but nothing more.
We'll drive these tyrants and their minions hence,
And raze their towering strongholds to the ground,
Yet shed, if possible, no drop of blood.
Let the emperor see that we were driven to cast
The sacred duties of respect away;
And when he finds we keep within our bounds,
His wrath, belike, may yield to policy;
For truly is that nation to be fear'd,
That, arms in hand, is temperate in its wrath.
REDING. But prithee tell us how may this be done?
The enemy is arm'd as well as we,
And, rest assured, he will not yield in peace.
STAUFF. He will, whene'er he sees us up in arms;
We shall surprise him ere he is prepared.
MEYER. Easily said, but not so easily done.
Two strongholds dominate the country — they
Protect the foe, and should the king invade us,
Our task would then be dangerous indeed.
Rossberg and Sarnen both must be secured,
Before a sword is drawn in either canton.
STAUFF. Should we delay, the foe would soon be warned;
We are too numerous for secrecy.
MEYER. There is no traitor in the Forest States.
RÖSSEL. But even zeal may heedlessly betray.

FÜRST. Delay it longer, and the keep at Altdorf
Will be complete, — the governor secure.
MEYER. You think but of ourselves.
SACRIST. You are unjust!
MEYER. Unjust!. said you? Dares Uri taunt us so?
REDING. Peace, on your oath!
SACRIST. If Schwytz be leagued with Uri,
Why, then, indeed, we must perforce be dumb.
REDING. And let me tell you, in the Diet's name,
Your hasty spirit much disturbs the peace.
Stand we not all for the same common cause?
WINK. What if till Christmas we delay? 'Tis then
The custom for the serfs to throng the castle,
Bringing the governor their annual gifts.
Thus may some ten or twelve selected men
Assemble unobserved, within its walls,
Bearing about their persons pikes of steel,
Which may be quickly mounted upon staves,
For arms are not admitted to the fort.
The rest can fill the neighb'ring wood, prepared
To sally forth upon a trumpet's blast,
Soon as their comrades have secured the gate;
And thus the castle will with ease be ours.
MELCH. The Rossberg I will undertake to scale.
I have a sweetheart in the garrison,
Whom with some tender words I could persuade
To lower me at night a hempen ladder.
Once up, my friends will not be long behind.
REDING. Are all resolved in favour of delay?
[*The majority raise their hands.*
STAUFF. (*counting them*) Twenty to twelve is the majority.
FÜRST. If on the appointed day the castles fall,
From mountain on to mountain we shall speed
The fiery signal: in the capital

Of every canton quickly rouse the Landsturm.[1]
Then, when these tyrants see our martial front,
Believe me, they will never make so bold
As risk the conflict, but will gladly take
Safe conduct forth beyond our boundaries.

STAUFF. Not so with Gessler. He will make a stand.
Surrounded with his dread array of horse,
Blood will be shed before he quits the field,
And even expell'd he'd still be terrible.
'Tis hard, nay, dangerous, to spare his life.

BAUM. Place me where'er a life is to be lost;
I owe my life to Tell, and cheerfully
Will pledge it for my country. I have clear'd
My honour, and my heart is now at rest.

REDING. Counsel will come with circumstance. Be patient!
Something must still be to the moment left.
Yet, while by night we hold our Diet here,
The morning, see, has on the mountain tops
Kindled her glowing beacon. Let us part,
Ere the broad sun surprise us.

FÜRST. Do not fear.
The night wanes slowly from these vales of ours.

[*All have involuntarily taken off their caps, and contemplate the breaking of day, absorbed in silence.*

RÖSSEL. By this fair light which greeteth us before
Those other nations, that, beneath us far,
In noisome cities pent, draw painful breath,
Swear we the oath of our confederacy!
A band of brothers true we swear to be,
Never to part in danger or in death!

[*They repeat his words with three fingers raised.*

We swear we will be free, as were our sires,

[1] A sort of national militia.

And sooner die than live in slavery!

[*All repeat as before.*

We swear to put our trust in God Most High,
And not to quail before the might of man!

[*All repeat as before, and embrace each other.*

STAUFF. Now every man pursue his several way
Back to his friends, his kindred, and his home.
Let the herd winter up his flock, and gain
In secret friends for this great league of ours!
What for a time must be endured, endure,
And let the reckoning of the tyrants grow,
Till the great day arrive, when they shall pay
The general and particular debt at once.
Let every man control his own just rage,
And nurse his vengeance for the public wrongs:
For he whom selfish interests now engage,
Defrauds the general weal of what to it belongs.

[*As they are going off in profound silence, in three different directions, the orchestra plays a solemn air. The empty scene remains open for some time, showing the rays of the sun rising over the glaciers.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.

Court before TELL'S *house.* TELL *with an axe.* HEDWIG *engaged in her domestic duties.* WALTER *and* WILHELM *in the background, playing with a little cross-bow.*

(WALTER *sings*).

With his cross-bow, and his quiver,
The huntsman speeds his way,
Over mountain, dale, and river,

At the dawning of the day.
As the eagle, on wild pinion,
Is the king in realms of air,
So the hunter claims dominion
Over crag and forest lair.
Far as ever bow can carry,
Thro' the trackless airy space,
All he sees he makes his quarry,
Soaring bird and beast of chase.

WILH. (*runs forward*) My string has snapt! Oh, father, mend it, do!

TELL. Not I; a true-born archer helps himself.

[*Boys retire.*

HEDW. The boys begin to use the bow betimes.

TELL. 'Tis early practice only makes the master.

HEDW. Ah! Would to heaven they never learnt the art!

TELL. But they shall learn it, wife, in all its points.
Whoe'er would carve an independent way
Through life, must learn to ward or plant a blow.

HEDW. Alas, alas! and they will never rest
Contentedly at home.

TELL. No more can I!
I was not framed by nature for a shepherd.
My restless spirit ever yearns for change;
I only feel the flush and joy of life,
If I can start fresh quarry every day.

HEDW. Heedless the while of all your wife's alarms,
As she sits watching through long hours at home.
For my soul sinks with terror at the tales
The servants tell about the risks you run.
Whene'er we part, my trembling heart forbodes
That you will ne'er come back to me again.
I see you on the frozen mountain steeps,
Missing, perchance, your leap from crag to crag.
I see the chamois, with a wild rebound,

Drag you down with him o'er the precipice.
I see the avalanche close o'er your head, —
The treacherous ice give way, and you sink down
Intombed alive within its hideous gulf.
Ah ! in a hundred varying forms does death
Pursue the Alpine huntsman on his course.
That way of life can surely ne'er be blessed,
Where life and limb are perill'd every hour.

TELL. The man that bears a quick and steady eye,
And trusts in God, and his own lusty thews,
Passes, with scarce a scar, through every danger.
The mountain cannot awe the mountain child.
[*Having finished his work he lays aside his tools.*
And now, methinks, the door will hold awhile, —
Axe in the house oft saves the carpenter.
[*Takes his cap.*

HEDW. Whither away ?

TELL. To Altdorf, to your father.

HEDW. You have some dangerous enterprise in view ?
Confess !

TELL. Why think you so ?

HEDW. Some scheme's on foot
Against the governors. There was a Diet
Held on the Rootli — that I know — and you
Are one of the confederacy, I'm sure.

TELL. I was not there. Yet will I not hold back,
Whene'er my country calls me to her aid.

HEDW. Wherever danger is, will you be placed.
On you, as ever, will the burden fall.

TELL. Each man shall have the post that fits his powers.

HEDW. You took — ay, 'mid the thickest of the storm —
The man of Unterwald across the lake.
'Tis marvel you escaped. Had you no thought
Of wife and children, then ?

TELL. Dear wife, I had;
And therefore saved the father for his children.
HEDW. To brave the lake in all its wrath! 'Twas not
To put your trust in God! 'Twas tempting him.
TELL. Little will he that's over cautious do.
HEDW. Yes, you've a kind and helping hand for all;
But be in straits, and who will lend you aid?
TELL. God grant I ne'er may stand in need of it!
[*Takes up his crossbow and arrows.*
HEDW. Why take your crossbow with you? leave it here.
TELL. I want my right hand, when I want my bow.
[*The boys return.*
WALT. Where, father, are you going?
TELL. To grand-dad, boy —
To Altdorf. Will you go?
WALT. Ay, that I will!
HEDW. The viceroy's there just now. Go not to Altdorf!
TELL. He leaves to-day.
HEDW. Then let him first begone,
Cross not his path. — You know he bears us grudge.
TELL. His ill-will cannot greatly injure me.
I do what's right, and care for no man's hate.
HEDW. 'Tis those who do what's right, whom most he hates.
TELL. Because he cannot reach them. Me, I ween,
His knightship will be glad to leave in peace.
HEDW. Ay! — Are you sure of that?
TELL. Not long ago,
As I was hunting through the wild ravines
Of Shechenthal, untrod by mortal foot, —
There, as I took my solitary way
Along a shelving ledge of rocks, where 'twas
Impossible to step on either side;
For high above rose, like a giant wall,
The precipice's side, and far below

"Dear wife, I gave my promise I would go"
Photogravure from the painting by Fred Schwarz

The Shechen thunder'd o'er its rifted bed; —
[*The boys press toward him, looking upon him with excited curiosity.*
There, face to face, I met the viceroy. He
Alone with me — and I myself alone —
Mere man to man, and near us the abyss,
And when his lordship had perused my face,
And knew the man he had severely fined
On some most trivial ground, not long before,
And saw me, with my sturdy bow in hand,
Come striding toward him, his cheek grew pale,
His knees refused their office, and I thought
He would have sunk against the mountainside.
Then, touch'd with pity for him, I advanced,
Respectfully, and said, "'Tis I, my lord."
But ne'er a sound could he compel his lips
To frame in answer. Only with his hand
He beckoned me in silence to proceed.
So I pass'd on, and sent his train to seek him.

HEDW. He trembl'd, then, before you? Woe the while
You saw his weakness; that he'll ne'er forgive.

TELL. I shun him, therefore, and he'll not seek me.

HEDW. But stay away to-day. Go hunt instead!

TELL. What do you fear?

HEDW. I am uneasy. Stay!

TELL. Why thus distress yourself without a cause?

HEDW. Because there is no cause. Tell, Tell! Stay here!

TELL. Dear wife, I gave my promise I would go.

HEDW. Must you, — then go. But leave the boys with me.

WALT. No, mother dear, I go with father, I.

HEDW. How, Walter! will you leave your mother then?

WALT. I'll bring you pretty things from grandpapa.
[*Exit with his father.*

WILH. Mother, I'll stay with you!
HEDW. (*embracing him*) Yes, yes! thou art
My own dear child. Thou'rt all that's left to me.
[*She goes to the gate of the court and looks anxiously after* TELL *and her son for a considerable time.*

SCENE II.

A retired part of the Forest. — Brooks dashing in spray over the rocks.

Enter BERTHA *in a hunting dress. Immediately afterward* RUDENZ.

BERTH. He follows me. Now, then, to speak my mind!
RUD. (*entering hastily*) At length, dear lady, we have met alone.
In this wild dell, with rocks on every side,
No jealous eye can watch our interview.
Now let my heart throw off this weary silence.
BERTH. But are you sure they will not follow us?
RUD. See, yonder goes the chase! Now, then, or never!
I must avail me of this precious chance! —
Must hear my doom decided by thy lips,
Though it should part me from thy side for ever.
Oh, do not arm that gentle face of thine
With looks so stern and harsh! Who — who am I,
That dare aspire so high as unto thee?
Fame hath not stamp'd me yet; nor may I take
My place amid the courtly throng of knights,
That, crown'd with glory's lustre, woo thy smiles.
Nothing have I to offer, but a heart
That overflows with truth and love for thee.

BERTH. (*sternly and with severity*) And dare you
speak to me of love — of truth?
You, that are faithless to your nearest ties!
You, that are Austria's slave — bartered and sold
To her — an alien, and your country's tyrant!
RUD. How! This reproach from thee! Whom do
I seek,
On Austria's side, my own beloved, but thee?
BERTH. Think you to find me in the traitor's ranks?
Now, as I live, I'd rather give my hand
To Gessler's self, all despot though he be,
Than to the Switzer who forgets his birth,
And stoops to be a tyrant's servile tool.
RUD. Oh, heaven, what words are these?
BERTH. Say! what can lie
Nearer the good man's heart than friends and kindred?
What dearer duty to a noble soul,
Than to protect weak suffering innocence,
And vindicate the rights of the oppress'd?
My very soul bleeds for your countrymen.
I suffer with them, for I needs must love them;
They are so gentle, yet so full of power;
They draw my whole heart to them. Every day
I look upon them with increased esteem.
But you, whom nature and your knightly vow
Have given them as their natural protector,
Yet who desert them and abet their foes
In forging shackles for your native land,
You — you incense and wound me to the core.
It tries me to the utmost not to hate you.
RUD. Is not my country's welfare all my wish?
What seek I for her but to purchase peace
'Neath Austria's potent sceptre?
BERTH. Bondage, rather!
You would drive freedom from the last stronghold
That yet remains for her upon the earth.
The people know their own true int'rests better:

Their simple natures are not warp'd by show.
But round your head a tangling net is wound.
RUD. Bertha, you hate me — you despise me!
BERTH. Nay!
And if I did, 'twere better for my peace.
But to see him despised and despicable, —
The man whom one might love —
RUD. Oh, Bertha! You
Show me the pinnacle of heavenly bliss,
Then, in a moment, hurl me to despair!
BERTH. No, no! the noble is not all extinct
Within you. It but slumbers, — I will rouse it.
It must have cost you many a fiery struggle
To crush the virtues of your race within you.
But, Heaven be praised, 'tis mightier than yourself,
And you are noble in your own despite!
RUD. You trust me, then? Oh, Bertha, with thy love
What might I not become!
BERTH. Be only that
For which your own high nature destin'd you.
Fill the position you were born to fill; —
Stand by your people and your native land —
And battle for your sacred rights!
RUD. Alas!
How can I win you — how can you be mine,
If I take arms against the emperor?
Will not your potent kinsmen interpose,
To dictate the disposal of your hand?
BERTH. All my estates lie in the forest cantons;
And I am free, when Switzerland is free.
RUD. Oh! what a prospect, Bertha, hast thou shown me!
BERTH. Hope not to win my hand by Austria's grace;
Fain would they lay their grasp on my estates,
To swell the vast domains which now they hold.

The selfsame lust of conquest, that would rob
You of your liberty, endangers mine.
Oh, friend, I'm mark'd for sacrifice; — to be
The guerdon of some parasite, perchance!
They'll drag me hence to the imperial court,
That hateful haunt of falsehood and intrigue,
And marriage bonds I loathe await me there.
Love, love alone, — your love can rescue me.

RUD. And thou couldst be content, love, to live here;
In my own native land to be my own?
Oh, Bertha, all the yearnings of my soul
For this great world and its tumultuous strife,
What were they, but a yearning after thee?
In glory's path I sought for thee alone,
And all my thirst of fame was only love.
But if in this calm vale thou canst abide
With me, and bid earth's pomps and pride adieu,
Then is the goal of my ambition won;
And the rough tide of the tempestuous world
May dash and rave around these firm-set hills!
No wandering wishes more have I to send
Forth to the busy scene that stirs beyond.
Then may these rocks, that girdle us, extend
Their giant walls impenetrably round,
And this sequestered happy vale alone
Look up to heaven, and be my paradise!

BERTH. Now art thou all my fancy dream'd of thee.
My trust has not been given to thee in vain.

RUD. Away, ye idle phantoms of my folly;
In mine own home I'll find my happiness.
Here, where the gladsome boy to manhood grew,
Where ev'ry brook, and tree, and mountain peak,
Teems with remembrances of happy hours,
In mine own native land thou wilt be mine.
Ah, I have ever loved it well, I feel
How poor without it were all earthly joys.

BERTH. Where should we look for happiness on earth,
If not in this dear land of innocence?
Here, where old truth hath its familiar home,
Where fraud and guile are strangers, envy ne'er
Shall dim the sparkling fountain of our bliss,
And ever bright the hours shall o'er us glide.
There do I see thee, in true manly worth,
The foremost of the free and of thy peers,
Revered with homage pure and unconstrain'd,
Wielding a power that kings might envy thee.

RUD. And thee I see, thy sex's crowning gem,
With thy sweet woman's grace and wakeful love,
Building a heaven for me within my home,
And, as the springtime scatters forth her flowers,
Adorning with thy charms my path of life,
And spreading joy and sunshine all around.

BERTH. And this it was, dear friend, that caused my grief,
To see thee blast this life's supremest bliss
With thine own hand. Ah! what had been my fate,
Had I been forced to follow some proud lord,
Some ruthless despot, to his gloomy keep!
Here are no keeps, here are no bastion'd walls
To part me from a people I can bless.

RUD. Yet how to free myself; to loose the coils
Which I have madly twined around my head?

BERTH. Tear them asunder with a man's resolve.
Whate'er ensue, firm by thy people stand!
It is thy post by birth.
[*Hunting-horns are heard in the distance.*
But hark! The chase!
Farewell, — 'tis needful we should part — away!
Fight for thy land; thou fightest for thy love.
One foe fills all our souls with dread; the blow
That makes one free, emancipates us all.
[*Exeunt severally.*

SCENE III.

A meadow near Altdorf. Trees in the foreground. At the back of the stage a cap upon a pole. The prospect is bounded by the Bannberg, which is surmounted by a snow-capped mountain.

FRIESSHARDT *and* LEUTHOLD *on guard.*

FRIESS. We keep our watch in vain. Zounds! not a soul
Will pass, and do obeisance to the cap.
But yesterday the place swarm'd like a fair;
Now the old green looks like a desert, quite,
Since yonder scarecrow hung upon the pole.

LEUTH. Only the vilest rabble show themselves,
And wave their tattered caps in mockery at us.
All honest citizens would sooner make
A weary circuit over half the town,
Then bend their backs before our master's cap.

FRIESS. They were obliged to pass this way at noon,
As they were coming from the Council House.
I counted then upon a famous catch,
For no one thought of bowing to the cap,
But Rösselmann, the priest, was even with me:
Coming just then from some sick man, he takes
His stand before the pole, — lifts up the Host —
The sacrist, too, must tinkle with his bell, —
When down they dropp'd on knee — myself and all —
In reverence to the Host, but not the cap.

LEUTH. Hark ye, companion, I've a shrewd suspicion,
Our post's no better than the pillory.
It is a burning shame a trooper should
Stand sentinel before an empty cap,
And every honest fellow must despise us.

To do obeisance to a cap, too! Faith,
I never heard an order so absurd!

FRIESS. Why not, an't please you, to an empty cap?
You've duck'd, I'm sure, to many an empty sconce.

[HILDEGARD, MECHTHILD, *and* ELSBETH *enter with their children, and station themselves around the pole.*

LEUTH. And you are a time-serving sneak, that takes
Delight in bringing honest folks to harm.
For my part, he that likes may pass the cap: —
I'll shut my eyes and take no note of him.

MECH. There hangs the viceroy! Your obeisance, children!

ELS. I would to God he'd go, and leave his cap!
The country would be none the worse for it.

FRIESS. (*driving them away*) Out of the way! Confounded pack of gossips!
Who sent for you? Go, send your husbands here,
If they have courage to defy the order.

[TELL *enters with his crossbow, leading his son* WALTER *by the hand. They pass the hat without noticing it, and advance to the front of the stage.*

WALT. (*pointing to the Bannberg*) Father, is't true, that on the mountain there
The trees, if wounded with a hatchet, bleed?

TELL. Who says so, boy?

WALT. The master herdsman, father!
He tells us there's a charm upon the trees,
And if a man shall injure them, the hand
That struck the blow will grow from out the grave.

TELL. There is a charm about them — that's the truth.
Dost see those glaciers yonder — those white horns —
That seem to melt away into the sky?

WALT. They are the peaks that thunder so at night,

And send the avalanches down upon us.

TELL. They are; and Altdorf long ago had been
Submerged beneath these avalanches' weight,
Did not the forest there above the town
Stand like a bulwark to arrest their fall.

WALT. (*after musing a little*) And are there countries with no mountains, father?

TELL. Yes, if we travel downward from our heights,
And keep descending where the rivers go,
We reach a wide and level country, where
Our mountain torrents brawl and foam no more,
And fair large rivers glide serenely on.
All quarters of the heaven may there be scann'd
Without impediment. The corn grows there
In broad and lovely fields, and all the land
Is like a garden fair to look upon.

WALT. But, father, tell me, wherefore haste we not
Away to this delightful land, instead
Of toiling here, and struggling as we do?

TELL. The land is fair and bountiful as Heaven;
But they who till it never may enjoy
The fruits of what they sow.

WALT. Live they not free,
As you do, on the land their fathers left them?

TELL. The fields are all the bishop's or the king's.

WALT. But they may freely hunt among the woods?

TELL. The game is all the monarch's — bird and beast.

WALT. But they, at least, may surely fish the streams?

TELL. Stream, lake, and sea, all to the king belong.

WALT. Who is this king, of whom they're so afraid?

TELL. He is the man who fosters and protects them.

WALT. Have they not courage to protect themselves?

TELL. The neighbour there dare not his neighbour trust.

WALT. I should want breathing room in such a land.
I'd rather dwell beneath the avalanches.

TELL. 'Tis better, child, to have these glacier peaks
Behind one's back, than evil-minded men!

[*They are about to pass on.*

WALT. See, father, see the cap on yonder pole!

TELL. What is the cap to us? Come, let's begone.

[*As he is going,* FRIESSHARDT, *presenting his pike, stops him.*

FRIESS. Stand, I command you, in the emperor's name!

TELL. (*seizing the pike*) What would ye? Wherefore do ye stop me thus?

FRIESS. You've broke the mandate, and with us must go.

LEUTH. You have not done obeisance to the cap.

TELL. Friend, let me go.

FRIESS. Away, away to prison!

WALT. Father to prison! Help!

[*Calling to the side scene.*

This way, you men!
Good people, help! They're dragging him to prison!

[RÖSSELMANN *the Priest, and the* SACRISTAN, *with three other men, enter.*

SACRIST. What's here amiss?

RÖSSEL. Why do you seize this man?

FRIESS. He is an enemy of the king — a traitor.

TELL. (*seizing him with violence*) A traitor, I!

RÖSSEL. Friend, thou art wrong. 'Tis Tell,
An honest man, and worthy citizen.

WALT. (*descries* FÜRST *and runs up to him*) Grandfather, help, they want to seize my father!

FRIESS. Away to prison!

FÜRST. (*running in*) Stay, I offer bail.

For God's sake, Tell, what is the matter here?

[MELCHTHAL *and* STAUFFACHER *enter.*

LEUTH. He has contemn'd the viceroy's sovereign power,
Refusing flatly to acknowledge it.

STAUFF. Has Tell done this?

MELCH. Villain, you know 'tis false!

LEUTH. He has not made obeisance to the cap.

FÜRST. And shall for this to prison? Come, my friend,
Take my security, and let him go.

FRIESS. Keep your security for yourself — you'll need it.
We only do our duty. Hence with him.

MELCH. (*to the country people*) This is too bad — shall we stand by and see
Him dragged away before our very eyes?

SACRIST. We are the strongest. Friends, endure it not,
Our countrymen will back us to a man.

FRIESS. Who dares resist the governor's commands?

OTHER THREE PEASANTS. (*running in*) We'll help you. What's the matter? Down with them!

[HILDEGARD, MECHTHILD *and* ELSBETH *return.*

TELL. Go, go, good people, I can help myself.
Think you, had I a mind to use my strength,
These pikes of theirs should daunt me?

MELCH. (*to* FRIESSHARDT) Only try —
Try from our midst to force him, if you dare.

FÜRST *and* STAUFF. Peace, peace, friends!

FRIESS. (*loudly*) Riot! Insurrection, ho!

[*Hunting-horns without.*

WOMEN. The governor!

FRIESS. (*raising his voice*) Rebellion! Mutiny!

STAUFF. Roar till you burst, knave!

RÖSSEL. *and* MELCH. Will you hold your tongue?

FRIESS. (*calling still louder*) Help, help, I say, the servants of the law!

FÜRST. The viceroy here! Then we shall smart for this!

[*Enter* GESSLER *on horseback, with a falcon on his wrist:* RUDOLPH DER HARRAS, BERTHA, *and* RUDENZ, *and a numerous train of armed attendants, who form a circle of lances around the whole stage.*

HAR. Room for the viceroy!

GESSL. Drive the clowns apart.
Why throng the people thus? Who calls for help?
[*General silence.*
Who was it? I *will* know.
[FRIESSHARDT *steps forward.*
And who art thou?
And why hast thou this man in custody?
[*Gives his falcon to an attendant.*

FRIESS. Dread sir, I am a soldier of your guard,
And station'd sentinel beside the cap;
This man I apprehended in the act
Of passing it without obeisance due.
So as you ordered, I arrested him,
Whereon to rescue him the people tried.

GESSL. (*after a pause*) And do you, Tell, so lightly hold your king,
And me, who act as his vice-regent here,
That you refuse obeisance to the cap
I hung aloft to test your loyalty?
I read in this a disaffected spirit.

TELL. Pardon me, good my lord! The action sprung
From inadvertence, — not from disrespect.
Were I discreet, I were not William Tell.
Forgive me now — I'll not offend again.

GESSL. (*after a pause*) I hear, Tell, you're a master with the bow, —

From every rival bear the palm away.

WALT. That's very truth, sir! At a hundred yards
He'll shoot an apple for you off the tree.

GESSL. Is that boy thine, Tell?

TELL. Yes, my gracious lord.

GESSL. Hast any more of them?

TELL. Two boys, my lord.

GESSL. And, of the two, which dost thou love the most?

TELL. Sir, both the boys are dear to me alike.

GESSL. Then, Tell, since at a hundred yards thou canst
Bring down the apple from the tree, thou shalt
Approve thy skill before me. Take thy bow —
Thou hast it there at hand — make ready, then,
To shoot an apple from the stripling's head!
But take this counsel, — look well to thine aim,
See, that thou hit'st the apple at the first,
For, shouldst thou miss, thy head shall pay the forfeit.
[*All give signs of horror.*

TELL. What monstrous thing, my lord, is this you ask?
What! from the head of mine own child! — No, no!
It cannot be, kind sir, you meant not that —
God in his grace, forbid! You could not ask
A father seriously to do that thing!

GESSL. Thou art to shoot an apple from his head!
I do desire — command it so.

TELL. What, I!
Level my crossbow at the darling head
Of mine own child? No — rather let me die!

GESSL. Or thou must shoot, or with thee dies the boy.

TELL. Shall I become the murderer of my child!
You have no children, sir — you do not know
The tender throbbings of a father's heart.

GESSL. How now, Tell, on a sudden so discreet?

I had been told thou wert a visionary, —
A wanderer from the paths of common men.
Thou lov'st the marvellous. So have I now
Cull'd out for thee a task of special daring.
Another man might pause and hesitate; —
Thou dashest at it, heart and soul, at once.

BERTH. Oh, do not jest, my lord, with these poor souls!
See, how they tremble, and how pale they look,
So little used are they to hear thee jest.

GESSL. Who tells thee that I jest?
[*Grasping a branch above his head.*
Here is the apple.
Room there, I say! And let him take his distance —
Just eighty paces, — as the custom is, —
Not an inch more or less! It was his boast
That at a hundred he could hit his man.
Now, archer, to your task, and look you miss not!

HAR. Heavens! this grows serious — down, boy, on your knees,
And beg the governor to spare your life.

FÜRST. (*aside to* MELCHTHAL, *who can scarcely restrain his indignation*)
Command yourself, — be calm, I beg of you!

BERTH. (*to the governor*) Let this suffice you, sir! It is inhuman
To trifle with a father's anguish thus.
Although this wretched man had forfeited
Both life and limb for such a slight offence,
Already has he suffer'd tenfold death.
Send him away uninjured to his home;
He'll know thee well in future; and this hour
He and his children's children will remember.

GESSL. Open a way there — quick! Why this delay?
Thy life is forfeited; I might despatch thee,
And see, I graciously repose thy fate

Upon the skill of thine own practised hand.
No cause has he to say his doom is harsh,
Who's made the master of his destiny.
Thou boastest thine unerring aim. 'Tis well!
Now is the fitting time to show thy skill;
The mark is worthy and the prize is great.
To hit the bull's-eye in the target; — that
Can many another do as well as thou;
But he, methinks, is master of his craft,
Who can at all times on his skill rely,
Nor lets his heart disturb or eye or hand.

FÜRST. My lord, we bow to your authority;
But oh, let justice yield to mercy here.
Take half my property, nay, take it all,
But spare a father this unnatural doom!

WALT. Grandfather, do not kneel to that bad man!
Say, where am I to stand? I do not fear;
My father strikes the bird upon the wing,
And will not miss now when 'twould harm his boy!

STAUFF. Does the child's innocence not touch your heart?

RÖSSEL. Bethink you, sir, there is a God in heaven,
To whom you must account for all your deeds.

GESSL. (*pointing to the boy*) Bind him to yonder lime-tree!

WALT. What! Bind me?
No, I will not be bound! I will be still,
Still as a lamb — nor even draw my breath!
But if you bind me, I cannot be still.
Then I shall writhe and struggle with my bonds.

HAR. But let your eyes at least be bandaged, boy!

WALT. And why my eyes? No! Do you think I fear
An arrow from my father's hand? Not I!
I'll wait it firmly, nor so much as wink!
Quick, father, show them what thy bow can do.
He doubts thy skill — he thinks to ruin us.

Shoot then and hit, though but to spite the tyrant!
[*He goes to the lime-tree, and an apple is placed on his head.*
MELCH. (*to the country people*) What! Is this outrage to be perpetrated
Before our very eyes? Where is our oath?
STAUFF. Resist we cannot! Weapons we have none,
And see the wood of lances round us! See!
MELCH. Oh! would to heaven that we had struck at once!
God pardon those who counsell'd the delay!
GESSL. (*to* TELL) Now to your task! Men bear not arms for naught.
To carry deadly tools is dangerous,
And on the archer oft his shaft recoils.
This right these haughty peasant churls assume
Trenches upon their master's privileges:
None should be armed but those who bear command.
It pleases you to carry bow and bolt;—
Well,—be it so. I will prescribe the mark.
TELL. (*bends the bow, and fixes the arrow*) A lane there! Room!
STAUFF. What, Tell? You would—no, no!
You shake—your hand's unsteady—your knees tremble.
TELL. (*letting the bow sink down*) There's something swims before mine eyes!
WOMEN. Great Heaven!
TELL. Release me from this shot! Here is my heart! [*Tears open his breast.*
Summon your troopers—let them strike me down!
GESSL. 'Tis not thy life I want—I want the shot.
Thy talent's universal! Nothing daunts thee!
The rudder thou canst handle like the bow!
No storms affright thee, when a life's at stake.

Now, saviour, help thyself, — thou savest all!

[TELL *stands fearfully agitated by contending emotions, his hands moving convulsively, and his eyes turning alternately to the governor and heaven. Suddenly he takes a second arrow from his quiver, and sticks it in his belt. The governor notes all he does.*

WALT. (*beneath the lime-tree*) Shoot, father, shoot! fear not!

TELL. It must be!

[*Collects himself and levels the bow.*

RUD. (*who all the while has been standing in a state of violent excitement, and has with difficulty restrained himself, advances*)

My lord, you will not urge this matter further;
You will not. It was surely but a test.
You've gained your object. Rigour push'd too far
Is sure to miss its aim, however good,
As snaps the bow that's all too straitly bent.

GESSL. Peace, till your counsel's ask'd for!

RUD. I will speak!

Ay, and I dare! I reverence my king;
But acts like these must make his name abhorr'd.
He sanctions not this cruelty. I dare
Avouch the fact. And you outstep your powers
In handling thus my harmless countrymen.

GESSL. Ha! thou grow'st bold, methinks!

RUD. I have been dumb
To all the oppressions I was doomed to see.
I've closed mine eyes to shut them from my view,
Bade my rebellious, swelling heart be still,
And pent its struggles down within my breast.
But to be silent longer, were to be
A traitor to my king and country both.

BERTH. (*casting herself between him and the governor*)

Oh, heavens! you but exasperate his rage!

RUD. My people I forsook — renounced my kindred —
Broke all the ties of nature, that I might
Attach myself to you. I madly thought
That I should best advance the general weal
By adding sinews to the emperor's power.
The scales have fallen from mine eyes — I see
The fearful precipice on which I stand.
You've led my youthful judgment far astray, —
Deceived my honest heart. With best intent,
I had well-nigh achiev'd my country's ruin.
GESSL. Audacious boy, this language to thy lord?
RUD. The emperor is my lord, not you! I'm free
As you by birth, and I can cope with you
In every virtue that beseems a knight.
And if you stood not here in that king's name,
Which I respect e'en where 'tis most abused,
I'd throw my gauntlet down, and you should give
An answer to my gage in knightly sort.
Ay, beckon to your troopers! Here I stand;
But not like these [*Pointing to the people.*
— unarmed. I have a sword,
And he that stirs one step —
STAUFF. (*exclaims*) The apple's down!
[*While the attention of the crowd has been directed to the spot where* BERTHA *had cast herself between* RUDENZ *and* GESSLER, TELL *has shot.*
RÖSSEL. The boy's alive!
MANY VOICES. The apple has been struck!
[WALTER FÜRST *staggers and is about to fall.* BERTHA *supports him.*
GESSL. (*astonished*) How? Has he shot? The madman!
BERTH. Worthy father!
Pray you, compose yourself. The boy's alive.
WALT. (*runs in with the apple*) Here is the apple, father! Well I knew

You would not harm your boy.

[TELL *stands with his body bent forward, as if still following the arrow. His bow drops from his hand. When he sees the boy advancing he hastens to meet him with open arms, and embracing him passionately sinks down with him quite exhausted. All crowd round them deeply affected.*

BERTH. Oh, ye kind Heavens!

FÜRST. (*to father and son*) My children, my dear children!

STAUFF. God be praised!

LEUTH. Almighty powers! That was a shot indeed!

It will be talked of to the end of time.

HAR. This feat of Tell, the archer, will be told
Long as these mountains stand upon their base.

[*Hands the apple to* GESSLER.

GESSL. By heaven! the apple's cleft right through the core.
It was a master shot, I must allow.

RÖSSEL. The shot was good. But woe to him who drove
The man to tempt his God by such a feat!

STAUFF. Cheer up, Tell, rise! You've nobly freed yourself,
And now may go in quiet to your home.

RÖSSEL. Come, to the mother let us bear her son!

[*They are about to lead him off.*

GESSL. A word, Tell.

TELL. Sir, your pleasure?

GESSL. Thou didst place
A second arrow in thy belt — nay, nay!
I saw it well. Thy purpose with it? Speak!

TELL. (*confused*) It is the custom with all archers, sir.

GESSL. No, Tell, I cannot let that answer pass.

There was some other motive, well I know.
Frankly and cheerfully confess the truth; —
Whate'er it be, I promise thee thy life.
Wherefore the second arrow?

TELL. Well, my lord,
Since you have promised not to take my life,
I will, without reserve, declare the truth.

[*He draws the arrow from his belt, and fixes his eyes sternly upon the governor.*

If that my hand had struck my darling child,
This second arrow I had aimed at you.
And, be assured, I should not then have miss'd.

GESSL. Well, Tell, I promised thou shouldst have thy life;
I gave my knightly word, and I will keep it.
Yet, as I know the malice of thy thoughts,
I'll have thee carried hence, and safely penn'd,
Where neither sun nor moon shall reach thine eyes.
Thus from thy arrows I shall be secure.
Seize on him, guards, and bind him! [*They bind him.*

STAUFF. How, my lord —
How can you treat in such a way a man
On whom God's hand has plainly been reveal'd?

GESSL. Well, let us see if it will save him twice!
Remove him to my ship; I'll follow straight,
At Küssnacht I will see him safely lodged.

RÖSSEL. You dare not do't. Nor durst the emperor's self
So violate our dearest chartered rights.

GESSL. Where are they? Has the emp'ror comfirm'd them?
He never has. And only by obedience
May you that favour hope to win from him.
You are all rebels 'gainst the emp'ror's power, —
And bear a desperate and rebellious spirit.
I know you all — I see you through and through.
Him do I single from amongst you now,

But in his guilt you all participate.
If you are wise, be silent and obey!

[*Exit, followed by* BERTHA, RUDENZ, HARRAS, *and attendants.* FRIESSHARDT *and* LEUTHOLD *remain.*

FÜRST. (*in violent anguish*) All's over now! He is resolved to bring
Destruction on myself and all my house.

STAUFF. (*to* TELL) Oh, why did you provoke the tyrant's rage?

TELL. Let him be calm who feels the pangs I felt.

STAUFF. Alas! alas! Our every hope is gone.
With you we all are fettered and enchain'd.

COUNTRY PEOPLE. (*surrounding* TELL) Our last remaining comfort goes with you!

LEUTH. (*approaching him*) I'm sorry for you, Tell, but must obey.

TELL. Farewell!

WALT. (*clinging to him in great agony*) Oh, father, father, father dear!

TELL. (*pointing to heaven*) Thy Father is on high — appeal to him!

STAUFF. Have you no message, Tell, to send your wife?

TELL. (*clasping the boy passionately to his breast*) The boy's uninjured; God will succour me!

[*Tears himself suddenly away, and follows the soldiers of the guard.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

Eastern shore of the Lake Lucerne; rugged and singularly shaped rocks close the prospect to the west. The lake is agitated, violent roaring and rushing of wind, with thunder and lightning at intervals.

KUNZ OF GERSAU, FISHERMAN *and* BOY.

KUNZ. I saw it with these eyes! Believe me, friend,
It happen'd all precisely as I've said.
FISHER. How! Tell a prisoner, and to Küssnacht borne?
The best man in the land, the bravest arm,
Had we for liberty to strike a blow!
KUNZ. The viceroy takes him up the lake in person:
They were about to go on board, as I
Started from Flüelen; but the gathering storm,
That drove me here to land so suddenly,
May well have hindered them from setting out.
FISHER. Our Tell in chains, and in the viceroy's power!
O, trust me, Gessler will entomb him where
He never more shall see the light of day;
For, Tell once free, the tyrant well might dread
The just revenge of one so deeply wrong'd.
KUNZ. The old Landamman, too — Von Attinghaus —
They say, is lying at the point of death.
FISHER. Then the last anchor of our hopes gives way!
He was the only man that dared to raise
His voice in favour of the people's rights.

KUNZ. The storm grows worse and worse. So, fare ye well!
I'll go and seek out quarters in the village.
There's not a chance of getting off to-day. [*Exit.*
FISHER. Tell dragg'd to prison, and the baron dead!
Now, tyranny, exalt thy brazen front, —
Throw every shame aside! Truth's voice is dumb!
The eye that watch'd for us, in darkness closed,
The arm that should have struck thee down, in chains!
BOY. 'Tis hailing hard — come, let us to the hut!
This is no weather to be out in, father!
FISHER. Rage on, ye winds! Ye lightnings, flash your fires!
Burst, ye swollen clouds! Ye cataracts of heaven,
Descend, and drown the country! In the germ
Destroy the generations yet unborn!
Ye savage elements, be lords of all!
Return, ye bears: ye ancient wolves, return
To this wide howling waste! The land is yours.
Who would live here, when liberty is gone!
BOY. Hark! How the wind whistles, and the whirlpool roars,
I never saw a storm so fierce as this!
FISHER. To level at the head of his own child!
Never had father such command before.
And shall not nature, rising in wild wrath,
Revolt against the deed? I should not marvel,
Though to the lake these rocks should bow their heads,
Though yonder pinnacles, yon towers of ice,
That, since creation's dawn, have known no thaw,
Should, from their lofty summits, melt away, —
Though yonder mountains, yon primeval cliffs,
Should topple down, and a new deluge whelm
Beneath its waves all living men's abodes!
[*Bells heard.*
BOY. Hark, they are ringing on the mountain, yonder!

They surely see some vessel in distress,
And toll the bell that we may pray for it.

[*Ascends a rock.*

FISHER. Woe to the bark that now pursues its course,
Rock'd in the cradle of these storm-tost waves!
Nor helm nor steersman here can aught avail;
The storm is master. Man is like a ball,
Toss'd 'twixt the winds and billows. Far or near,
No haven offers him its friendly shelter!
Without one ledge to grasp, the sheer smooth rocks
Look down inhospitably on his despair,
And only tender him their flinty breasts.

BOY. (*calling from above*) Father, a ship: from Flüelen bearing down.

FISHER. Heaven pity the poor wretches! When the storm
Is once entangled in this strait of ours,
It rages like some savage beast of prey,
Struggling against its cage's iron bars!
Howling, it seeks an outlet — all in vain;
For the rocks hedge it round on every side,
Walling the narrow gorge as high as heaven.

[*He ascends a cliff.*

BOY. It is the governor of Uri's ship;
By its red poop I know it, and the flag.

FISHER. Judgments of Heaven! Yes, it is he himself,
It is the governor! Yonder he sails,
And with him bears the burden of his crimes.
The avenger's arm has not been slow to strike!
Now over him he knows a mightier lord.
These waves yield no obedience to his voice.
These rocks bow not their heads before his cap.
Boy, do not pray; stay not the Judge's arm!

BOY. I pray not for the governor, I pray
For Tell, who's with him there on board the ship.

FISHER. Alas, ye blind, unreasoning elements!
Must ye, in punishing one guilty head,
Destroy the vessel and the pilot too?
BOY. See, see, they've clear'd the Buggisgrat;[1] but now
The blast, rebounding from the Devil's Minster,[1]
Has driven them back on the Great Axenberg.[1]
I cannot see them now.
FISHER. The Hakmesser[1]
Is there, that's founder'd many a gallant ship.
If they should fail to double that with skill,
Their bark will go to pieces on the rocks
That hide their jagged peaks below the lake.
The best of pilots, boy, they have on board.
If man could save them, Tell is just the man,
But he is manacled both hand and foot.

[*Enter* WILLIAM TELL, *with his crossbow. He enters precipitately, looks wildly round, and testifies the most violent agitation. When he reaches the centre of the stage, he throws himself upon his knees, and stretches out his hands, first toward the earth, then toward heaven.*

BOY. (*observing him*) See, father! A man on's knees, who can it be?
FISHER. He clutches at the earth with both his hands,
And looks as though he were beside himself.
BOY. (*advancing*) What do I see? Come, father, come and look!
FISHER. (*approaches*) Who is it? God in heaven! What! William Tell!
How came you hither? Speak, Tell!
BOY. Were you not
In yonder ship, a prisoner, and in chains?
FISHER. Were they not carrying you to Küssnacht, Tell?

[1] Rocks on the shore of the Lake of Lucerne.

TELL. (*rising*) I am released.
FISHER. *and* BOY. Released, oh, miracle!
BOY. Whence came you here?
TELL. From yonder vessel!
FISHER. What?
BOY. Where is the viceroy?
TELL. Drifting on the waves.
FISHER. Is't possible? But you! How are you here?
How 'scaped you from your fetters and the storm?
TELL. By God's most gracious providence. Attend.
FISHER. *and* BOY. Say on, say on!
TELL. You know what passed at Altdorf.
FISHER. I do — say on!
TELL. How I was seized and bound,
And order'd by the governor to Küssnacht.
FISHER. And how at Flüelen he embarked with you.
All this we know. Say, how have you escaped?
TELL. I lay on deck, fast bound with cords, disarm'd,
In utter hopelessness. I did not think
Again to see the gladsome light of day,
Nor the dear faces of my wife and boys,
And eyed disconsolate the waste of waters. —
FISHER. Oh, wretched man!
TELL. Then we put forth; the viceroy,
Rudolph der Harras, and their suite. My bow
And quiver lay astern beside the helm;
And just as we had reached the corner, near
The little Axen,[1] Heaven ordain'd it so,
That from the Gotthardt's gorge, a hurricane
Swept down upon us with such headlong force,
That every oarsman's heart within him sank,
And all on board look'd for a watery grave.
Then heard I one of the attendant train,

[1] A rock on the shore of the Lake of Lucerne.

Turning to Gessler, in this wise accost him:
"You see our danger, and your own, my lord,
And that we hover on the verge of death.
The boatmen there are powerless from fear,
Nor are they confident what course to take;—
Now, here is Tell, a stout and fearless man,
And knows to steer with more than common skill,
How if we should avail ourselves of him
In this emergency?" The viceroy then
Address'd me thus: "If thou wilt undertake
To bring us through this tempest safely, Tell,
I might consent to free thee from thy bonds."
I answer'd, "Yes, my lord; so help me God,
I'll see what can be done." On this they loosed
The cords that bound me, and I took my place
Beside the helm, and steered as best I could,
Yet ever eyed my shooting gear askance,
And kept a watchful eye upon the shore,
To find some point where I might leap to land:
And when I had descried a shelving crag,
That jutted, smooth atop, into the lake —

FISHER. I know it. At the foot of the Great Axen;
So steep it looks, I never could have dreamt
That from a boat a man could leap to it.

TELL. I bade the men to row with all their force
Until we came before the shelving ledge.
For there, I said, the danger will be past!
Stoutly they pull'd, and soon we near'd the point;
One prayer to God for his assisting grace,
And, straining every muscle, I brought round
The vessel's stern close to the rocky wall;
Then snatching up my weapons, with a bound
I swung myself upon the flattened shelf,
And with my feet thrust off, with all my might,
The puny bark into the watery hell.
There let it drift about, as Heaven ordains!

Thus am I here, deliver'd from the might
Of the dread storm, and man's more dreadful still.
FISHER. Tell, Tell, the Lord has manifestly wrought
A miracle in thy behalf! I scarce
Can credit my own eyes. But tell me, now,
Whither you purpose to betake yourself?
For you will be in peril, should perchance
The viceroy 'scape this tempest with his life.
TELL. I heard him say, as I lay bound on board,
At Brunnen he proposed to disembark,
And, crossing Schwytz, convey me to his castle.
FISHER. Means he to go by land?
TELL. So he intends.
FISHER. Oh, then conceal yourself without delay!
Not twice will Heaven release you from his grasp.
TELL. Which is the nearest way to Arth and Küssnacht?
FISHER. The public road leads by the way of Steinen,
But there's a nearer road, and more retired,
That goes by Lowerz, which my boy can show you.
TELL. (*gives him his hand*) May Heaven reward your kindness! Fare ye well.
[*As he is going, he comes back.*
Did not you also take the oath at Rootli?
I heard your name, methinks.
FISHER. Yes, I was there,
And took the oath of the confederacy.
TELL. Then do me this one favour: speed to Bürglen —
My wife is anxious at my absence — tell her
That I am free, and in secure concealment.
FISHER. But whither shall I tell her you have fled?
TELL. You'll find her father with her, and some more,
Who took the oath with you upon the Rootli;
Bid them be resolute, and strong of heart, —

For Tell is free and master of his arm;
They shall hear further news of me ere long.

FISHER. What have you, then, in view? Come, tell me frankly!

TELL. When once 'tis *done*, 'twill be in every mouth. [*Exit.*

FISHER. Show him the way, boy. Heaven be his support!

Whate'er he has resolved, he'll execute. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.

Baronial mansion of Attinghausen. The BARON *upon a couch dying.* WALTER FÜRST, STAUFFACHER, MELCHTHAL, *and* BAUMGARTEN *attending around him.* WALTER TELL *kneeling before the dying man.*

FÜRST. All now is over with him. He is gone.

STAUFF. He lies not like one dead. The feather, see,
Moves on his lips! His sleep is very calm,
And on his features plays a placid smile.

[BAUMGARTEN *goes to the door and speaks with some one.*

FÜRST. Who's there?

BAUM. (*returning*) Tell's wife, your daughter, she insists
That she must speak with you, and see her boy.

[WALTER TELL *rises.*

FÜRST. I who need comfort — can I comfort her?
Does every sorrow centre on my head?

HEDW. (*forcing her way in*) Where is my child? unhand me! I must see him.

STAUFF. Be calm! Reflect, you're in the house of death!

HEDW. (*falling upon her boy's neck*) My Walter!
Oh, he yet is mine!
WALT. Dear mother!
HEDW. And is it surely so? Art thou unhurt?
[*Gazing at him with anxious tenderness.*
And is it possible he aim'd at thee?
How could he do it? Oh, he has no heart —
And he could wing an arrow at his child!
FÜRST. His soul was rack'd with anguish when he did it.
No choice was left him, but to shoot or die!
HEDW. Oh, if he had a father's heart, he would
Have sooner perish'd by a thousand deaths!
STAUFF. You should be grateful for God's gracious care,
That ordered things so well.
HEDW. Can I forget
What might have been the issue? God of Heaven,
Were I to live for centuries, I still
Should see my boy tied up, — his father's mark, —
And still the shaft would quiver in my heart.
MELCH. You know not how the viceroy taunted him!
HEDW. Oh, ruthless heart of man! Offend his pride,
And reason in his breast forsakes her seat;
In his blind wrath he'll stake upon a cast
A child's existence, and a mother's heart!
BAUM. Is then your husband's fate not hard enough,
That you embitter it by such reproaches?
Have you no feeling for his sufferings?
HEDW. (*turning to him and gazing full upon him*) Hast thou tears only for thy friend's distress?
Say, where were you when he — my noble Tell —
Was bound in chains? Where was your friendship then?

The shameful wrong was done before your eyes;
Patient you stood, and let your friend be dragg'd,
Ay, from your very hands. Did ever Tell
Act thus to you? Did he stand whining by,
When on your heels the viceroy's horsemen press'd,
And full before you roared the storm-toss'd lake?
Oh not with idle tears his pity show'd;
Into the boat he sprang, forgot his home,
His wife, his children, and delivered thee!

FÜRST. It had been madness to attempt his rescue,
Unarm'd, and few in numbers as we were.

HEDW. (*casting herself upon his bosom*) Oh, father,
and thou, too, hast lost my Tell!
The country — all have lost him! All lament
His loss; and, oh, how he must pine for us!
Heaven keep his soul from sinking to despair!
No friend's consoling voice can penetrate
His dreary dungeon walls. Should he fall sick!
Ah! In the vapours of the murky vault
He must fall sick. Even as the Alpine rose
Grows pale and withers in the swampy air,
There is no life for him, but in the sun,
And in the breath of Heaven's fresh-blowing airs.
Imprison'd! Liberty to him is breath;
He cannot live in the rank dungeon air!

STAUFF. Pray you be calm! And hand in hand
we'll all
Combine to burst his prison doors.

HEDW. He gone,
What have you power to do? While Tell was free,
There still, indeed, was hope — weak innocence
Had still a friend, and the oppress'd a stay.
Tell saved you all! You cannot all combined
Release him from his cruel prison bonds.

[*The* BARON *wakes.*

BAUM. Hush, hush! He starts!

ATTING. (*sitting up*) Where is he?

STAUFF. Who?
ATTING. He leaves me, —
In my last moments he abandons me.
STAUFF. He means his nephew. Have they sent for him?
FÜRST. He has been summoned. Cheerly, sir! Take comfort!
He has found his heart at last, and is our own.
ATTING. Say, has he spoken for his native land?
STAUFF. Ay, like a hero!
ATTING. Wherefore comes he not,
That he may take my blessing ere I die?
I feel my life fast ebbing to a close.
STAUFF. Nay, talk not thus, dear sir! This last short sleep
Has much refresh'd you, and your eye is bright.
ATTING. Life is but pain, and that has left me now;
My sufferings, like my hopes, have pass'd away.
[*Observing the boy.*
What boy is that?
FÜRST. Bless him. Oh, good my lord!
He is my grandson, and is fatherless.
[HEDWIG *kneels with the boy before the dying man.*
ATTING. And fatherless — I leave you all, ay, all!
Oh, wretched fate, that these old eyes should see
My country's ruin, as they close in death!
Must I attain the utmost verge of life,
To feel my hopes go with me to the grave?
STAUFF. (*to* FÜRST) Shall he depart 'mid grief and gloom like this?
Shall not his parting moments be illumed
By hope's inspiring beams? My noble lord,
Raise up your drooping spirit! We are not
Forsaken quite — past all deliverance.
ATTING. Who shall deliver you?
FÜRST. Ourselves. For know,
The cantons three are to each other pledged,

To hunt the tyrants from the land. The league
Has been concluded, and a sacred oath
Confirms our union. Ere another year
Begins its circling course — the blow shall fall.
In a free land your ashes shall repose.

ATTING. The league concluded! Is it really so?

MELCH. On one day shall the cantons rise together.
All is prepared to strike — and to this hour
The secret closely kept, though hundreds share it;
The ground is hollow 'neath the tyrants' feet;
Their days of rule are number'd, and ere long
No trace will of their hateful sway be left.

ATTING. Ay, but their castles, how to master them?

MELCH. On the same day they, too, are doom'd to fall.

ATTING. And are the nobles parties to this league?

STAUFF. We trust to their assistance, should we need it;
As yet the peasantry alone have sworn.

ATTING. *(raising himself up in great astonishment)*
And have the peasantry dared such a deed
On their own charge, without the nobles' aid —
Relied so much on their own proper strength?
Nay then, indeed, they want our help no more;
We may go down to death cheer'd by the thought,
That after us the majesty of man
Will live, and be maintain'd by other hands.

[He lays his hand upon the head of the child who is kneeling before him.

From this boy's head, whereon the apple lay,
Your new and better liberty shall spring;
The old is crumbling down — the times are changing —
And from the ruins blooms a fairer life.

STAUFF. *(to* FÜRST) See, see, what splendour streams around his eye!
This is not nature's last expiring flame,
It is the beam of renovated life.

ATTING. From their old towers the nobles are descending,
And swearing in the towns the civic oath.
In Uechtland and Thurgau the work's begun;
The noble Berne lifts her commanding head,
And Freiburg is a stronghold of the free;
The stirring Zurich calls her guilds to arms; —
And now, behold! — the ancient might of kings
Is shiver'd 'gainst her everlasting walls.

[*He speaks what follows with a prophetic tone; his utterance rising into enthusiasm.*

I see the princes and their haughty peers,
Clad all in steel, come striding on to crush
A harmless shepherd race with mailèd hand.
Desp'rate the conflict; 'tis for life or death;
And many a pass will tell to after years
Of glorious victories sealed in foemen's blood.
The peasant throws himself with naked breast,[1]
A willing victim on their serried spears;
They yield — the flower of chivalry's cut down,
And Freedom waves her conquering banner high.

[*Grasps the hands of* WALTER FÜRST *and* STAUFFACHER.

Hold fast together, then, — for ever fast!
Let freedom's haunts be one in heart and mind!
Set watches on your mountain tops, that league
May answer league, when comes the hour to strike.
Be one — be one — be one —

[1] An allusion to the gallant self-devotion of Arnold Struthan of Winkelried, at the battle of Sempach [9th July, 1386], who broke the Austrian phalanx by rushing on their lances, grasping as many of them as he could reach, and concentrating them upon his breast. The confederates rushed forward through the gap thus opened by the sacrifice of their comrade, broke and cut down their enemy's ranks, and soon became the master of the field. "Dear and faithful confederates, I will open you a passage. Protect my wife and children," were the words of Winkelried, as he rushed to death.

[*He falls back upon the cushion. His lifeless hands continue to grasp those of* FÜRST *and* STAUFFACHER, *who regard him for some moments in silence, and then retire, overcome with sorrow. Meanwhile the servants have quietly pressed into the chamber, testifying different degrees of grief. Some kneel down beside him and weep on his body: while this scene is passing, the castle bell tolls.*

RUD. (*entering hurriedly*) Lives he? Oh, say, can he still hear my voice?

FÜRST. (*averting his face*) You are our seignior and protector now;
Henceforth this castle bears another name.

RUD. (*gazing at the body with deep emotion*) Oh, God! Is my repentance, then, too late?
Could he not live some few brief moments more,
To see the change that has come o'er my heart?
Oh, I was deaf to his true counselling voice,
While yet he walked on earth. Now he is gone, —
Gone, and for ever, — leaving me the debt —
The heavy debt I owe him — undischarged!
Oh, tell me! did he part in anger with me?

STAUFF. When dying, he was told what you had done,
And bless'd the valour that inspired your words.

RUD. (*kneeling down beside the dead body*) Yes, sacred relics of a man beloved!
Thou lifeless corpse! Here, on thy death-cold hand,
Do I abjure all foreign ties for ever!
And to my country's cause devote myself.
I am a Switzer, and will act as one,
With my whole heart and soul. [*Rises.*
Mourn for our friend,
Our common parent, yet be not dismay'd!
'Tis not alone his lands that I inherit, —
His heart — his spirit, have devolved on me;

And my young arm shall execute the task,
Which in his hoary age he could not pay.
Give me your hands, ye venerable sires!
Thine, Melchthal, too! Nay, do not hesitate,
Nor from me turn distrustfully away.
Accept my plighted vow — my knightly oath!

FÜRST. Give him your hands, my friends! A heart like his,
That sees and owns its error, claims our trust.

MELCH. You ever held the peasantry in scorn,
What surety have we that you mean us fair?

RUD. Oh, think not of the error of my youth!

STAUFF. (*to* MELCHTHAL) Be one! They were our father's latest words.
See they be not forgotten!

MELCH. Take my hand, —
A peasant's hand, — and with it, noble sir,
The gage and the assurance of a man!
Without us, sir, what would the nobles be?
Our order is more ancient, too, than yours!

RUD. I honour it — will shield it with my sword!

MELCH. The arm, my lord, that tames the stubborn earth,
And makes its bosom blossom with increase,
Can also shield its owner's breast at need.

RUD. Then you shall shield my breast, and I will yours,
Thus each be strengthen'd by the other's strength.
Yet wherefore talk we, while our native land
Is still to alien tyranny a prey?
First let us sweep the foemen from the soil,
Then reconcile our difference in peace!

[*After a moment's pause.*

How! You are silent! Not a word for me?
And have I yet no title to your trust? —
Then must I force my way, despite your will,
Into the league you secretly have form'd.

You've held a Diet on the Rootli, — I
Know this, — know all that was transacted there;
And though not trusted with your secret, I
Have kept it closely like a sacred pledge.
Trust me — I never was my country's foe,
Nor would I ever have against you stood!
Yet you did wrong — to put your rising off.
Time presses! We must strike, and swiftly too!
Already Tell is lost through your delay.

STAUFF. We swore that we should wait till Christmastide.

RUD. I was not there, — I did not take the oath.
If you delay, I will not!

MELCH. What! You would —

RUD. I count me now among the country's chiefs.
And my first duty is to guard your rights.

FÜRST. Your nearest and your holiest duty is
Within the earth to lay these dear remains.

RUD. When we have set the country free, we'll place
Our fresh victorious wreaths upon his bier.
Oh, my dear friends, 'tis not your cause alone! —
I with the tyrants have a cause to fight,
That more concerns myself. My Bertha's gone,
Has disappear'd, — been carried off by stealth, —
Stolen from amongst us by their ruffian hands!

STAUFF. So fell an outrage has the tyrant dared
Against a lady free and nobly born?

RUD. Alas! my friends, I promised help to you,
And I must first implore it for myself!
She that I love is stolen — is forced away,
And who knows where she's by the tyrant hid,
Or with what outrages his ruffian crew
May force her into nuptials she detests?
Forsake me not! — Oh, help me to her rescue!
She loves you! Well, oh well, has she deserved
That all should rush to arms in her behalf!

STAUFF. What course do you propose?
RUD. Alas! I know not.
In the dark mystery that shrouds her fate,—
In the dread agony of this suspense,—
Where I can grasp at nought of certainty,—
One single ray of comfort beams upon me.
From out the ruins of the tyrant's power
Alone can she be rescued from the grave.
Their strongholds must be levell'd, every one,
Ere we can penetrate her dungeon walls.
MELCH. Come, lead us on! We follow! Why defer
Until to-morrow, what to-day may do?
Tell's arm was free when we at Rootli swore.
This foul enormity was yet undone.
And change of circumstance brings change of vow;
Who such a coward as to waver still?
RUD. (*to* WALTER FÜRST) Meanwhile to arms, and wait in readiness
The fiery signal on the mountain tops!
For swifter than a boat can scour the lake
Shall you have tidings of our victory;
And when you see the welcome flames ascend,
Then, like the lightning, swoop upon the foe,
And lay the despots and their creatures low!

SCENE III.

The pass near Küssnacht, sloping down from behind, with rocks on either side. The travellers are visible upon the heights, before they appear on the stage. Rocks all around the stage. Upon one of the foremost a projecting cliff overgrown with brushwood.

TELL. (*enters with his crossbow*) Through this ravine he needs must come. There is
No other way to Küssnacht. Here I'll do it!

The ground is everything I could desire.
Yon elder bush will hide me from his view,
And from that point my shaft is sure to hit.
The straitness of the gorge forbids pursuit.
Now, Gessler, balance thine account with Heaven!
Thou must away from earth, — thy sand is run.

Quiet and harmless was the life I led,
My bow was bent on forest game alone;
No thoughts of murder rested on my soul.
But thou hast scared me from my dream of peace;
The milk of human kindness thou hast turn'd
To rankling poison in my breast; and made
Appalling deeds familiar to my soul.
He who could make his own child's head his mark
Can speed his arrow to his foeman's heart.

My boys, poor innocents, my loyal wife,
Must be protected, tyrant, from thy rage!
When last I drew my bow — with trembling hand —
And thou, with fiendishly remorseless glee
Forced me to level at my own boy's head,
When I, imploring pity, writhed before thee,
Then, in the anguish of my soul, I vow'd
And fearful oath, which met God's ear alone,
That when my bow next wing'd an arrow's flight,
Its aim should be thy heart. The vow I made,
Amid the hellish torments of that moment,
I hold a sacred debt, and I will pay it.

Thou art my lord, my emperor's delegate;
Yet would the emperor not have stretch'd his power
So far as thou hast done. He sent thee here
To deal forth law — stern law — for he is wroth;
But not to wanton with unbridled will
In every cruelty, with fiend-like joy: —
There lives a God to punish and avenge.

Come forth, thou bringer once of bitter pangs,
My precious jewel now, — my chiefest treasure —
A mark I'll set thee, which the cry of grief
Could never penetrate, — but thou shalt pierce it, —
And thou, my trusty bowstring, that so oft
For sport has served me faithfully and well,
Desert me not in this dread hour of need, —
Only be true this once, my own good cord,
That hast so often wing'd the biting shaft: —
For shouldst thou fly successless from my hand,
I have no second to send after thee.

[*Travellers pass over the stage.*

I'll sit me down upon this bench of stone,
Hewn for the wayworn traveller's brief repose —
For here there is no home. Men hurry past
Each other, with quick step and careless look,
Nor stay to question of their grief. Here goes
The merchant, all anxiety, — the pilgrim,
With scantly furnished scrip, — the pious monk,
The scowling robber, and the jovial player,
The carrier with his heavy-laden horse,
That comes to us from the far haunts of men;
For every road conducts to the world's end.
They all push onward — every man intent
On his own several business — mine is murder.

[*Sits down.*

Time was, my dearest children, when with joy
You hail'd your father's safe return to home
From his long mountain toils; for, when he came,
He ever brought with him some little gift, —
A lovely Alpine flower — a curious bird —
Or elf-bolt, such as on the hills are found.
But now he goes in quest of other game,
Sits in this gorge, with murder in his thoughts,
And for his enemy's life-blood lies in wait.

But still it is of you alone he thinks,
Dear children. 'Tis to guard your innocence,
To shield you from the tyrant's fell revenge,
He bends his bow to do a deed of blood! [*Rises.*

Well — I am watching for a noble prey —
Does not the huntsman, with unflinching heart,
Roam for whole days, when winter frosts are keen,
Leap at the risk of death from rock to rock, —
And climb the jagged, slippery steeps, to which
His limbs are glued by his own streaming blood —
And all to hunt a wretched chamois down?
A far more precious prize is now my aim —
The heart of that dire foe, who seeks my life.

[*Sprightly music heard in the distance, which comes gradually nearer.*

From my first years of boyhood I have used
The bow — been practised in the archer's feats;
The bull's-eye many a time my shafts have hit,
And many a goodly prize have I brought home
From competitions. But this day I'll make
My master-shot, and win what's best to win
In the whole circuit of our mountain range.

[*A bridal party passes over the stage, and goes up the pass.* TELL *gazes at it, leaning on his bow. He is joined by* STUSSI *the Ranger.*

STUSSI. There goes the cloister bailiff's bridal train
Of Mörlischachen. A rich fellow he!
And has some half score pastures on the Alps.
He goes to fetch his bride from Imisee.
At Küssnacht there will be high feast to-night.
Come with us — ev'ry honest man is asked.

TELL. A gloomy guest fits not a wedding feast.

STUSSI. If you've a trouble, dash it from your heart!

Take what Heaven sends! The times are heavy now,
And we must snatch at pleasure as it flies.
Here 'tis a bridal, there a burial.

TELL. And oft the one close on the other treads.

STUSSI. So runs the world we live in. Everywhere
Mischance befals and misery enough.
In Glarus there has been a landslip, and
A whole side of the Glärnisch has fallen in.

TELL. How! Do the very hills begin to quake?
There is stability for naught on earth.

STUSSI. Of strange things, too, we hear from other parts.
I spoke with one but now, from Baden come,
Who said a knight was on his way to court,
And, as he rode along, a swarm of wasps
Surrounded him, and settling on his horse,
So fiercely stung the beast, that it fell dead,
And he proceeded to the court on foot.

TELL. The weak are also furnish'd with a sting.

ARMGART *enters with several children, and places herself at the entrance of the pass.*

STUSSI. 'Tis thought to bode disaster to the land,—
Some horrid deeds against the course of nature.

TELL. Why, every day brings forth such fearful deeds;
There needs no prodigy to herald them.

STUSSI. Ay, happy he who tills his field in peace,
And sits at home untroubled with his kin.

TELL. The very meekest cannot be at peace
If his ill neighbour will not let him rest.

[TELL *looks frequently with restless expectation toward the top of the pass.*

STUSSI. So fare you well! You're waiting some one here?

TELL. I am.

STUSSI. God speed you safely to your home!

You are from Uri, are you not? His Grace
The governor's expected thence to-day.

TRAVELLER. (*entering*) Look not to see the governor to-day.
The streams are flooded by the heavy rains,
And all the bridges have been swept away.

[TELL *rises.*

ARM. (*coming forward*) Gessler not coming?

STUSSI. Want you aught with him?

ARM. Alas, I do!

STUSSI. Why, then, thus place yourself
Where you obstruct his passage down the pass?

ARM. Here he cannot escape me. He *must* hear me.

FRIESS. (*coming hastily down the pass and calls upon the stage*)
Make way, make way! My lord, the governor,
Is close behind me, riding down the pass. [*Exit* TELL.

ARM. (*excitedly*) The viceroy comes!

[*She goes toward the pass with her children.* GESSLER *and* RUDOLPH DER HARRAS *appear on horseback at the upper end of the pass.*

STUSSI. (*to* FRIESSHARDT) How got ye through the stream,
When all the bridges have been carried down?

FRIESS. We've fought, friend, with the tempest on the lake;
An Alpine torrent's nothing after that.

STUSSI. How! were you out, then, in that dreadful storm?

FRIESS. We were! I'll not forget it while I live.

STUSSI. Stay, speak —

FRIESS. I can't, — must to the castle haste,
And tell them that the governor's at hand. [*Exit.*

STUSSI. If honest men, now, had been in the ship,
It had gone down with every soul on board: —
Some folks are proof 'gainst fire and water both.

[*Looking round.*

Where has the huntsman gone with whom I spoke?
[*Exit.*

Enter GESSLER *and* RUDOLPH DER HARRAS *on horseback.*

GESSL. Say what you will; I am the emperor's liege,
And how to please him my first thought must be.
He did not send me here to fawn and cringe,
And coax these boors into good humour. No!
Obedience he must have. The struggle's this;
Is king or peasant to be sovereign here?

ARM. Now is the moment! Now for my petition!

GESSL. 'Twas not in sport that I set up the cap
In Altdorf — or to try the people's hearts —
All this I knew before. I set it up,
That they might learn to bend those stubborn necks
They carry far too proudly — and I placed
What well I knew their pride could never brook
Full in the road, which they perforce must pass,
That, when their eye fell on it, they might call
That lord to mind whom they too much forget.

HAR. But surely, sir, the people have some rights —

GESSL. This is no time to settle what they are.
Great projects are at work, and hatching now.
The imperial house seeks to extend its power.
Those vast designs of conquest which the sire
Has gloriously begun, the son will end.
This petty nation is a stumbling-block —
One way or other, it must be put down.

[*They are about to pass on.* ARMGART *throws herself down before* GESSLER.

ARM. Mercy, lord governor! Oh, pardon, pardon!

GESSL. Why do you cross me on the public road?
Stand back, I say!

ARM. My husband lies in prison;
My wretched orphans cry for bread. Have pity,
Pity, my lord, upon our sore distress!

HAR. Who are you? and your husband, what is he?
ARM. A poor wild-hay-man of the Rigiberg,
Kind sir, who, on the brow of the abyss,
Mows the unowner'd grass from craggy shelves
To which the very cattle dare not climb.
HAR. (*to* GESSLER) By Heaven! a sad and pitiable life!
I pray you set the wretched fellow free.
How great soever may be his offence,
His horrid trade is punishment enough. [*To* ARMGART.
You shall have justice. To the castle bring
Your suit. This is no place to deal with it.
ARM. No, no, I will not stir from where I stand,
Until your Grace gives me my husband back.
Six months already has he been shut up,
And waits the sentence of a judge in vain.
GESSL. How! would you force me, woman? Hence! Begone!
ARM. Justice, my lord! Ay, justice! Thou art judge:
Vice-regent of the emperor — of Heaven.
Then do thy duty, — as thou hopest for justice
From Him who rules above, show it to us!
GESSL. Hence! Drive this insolent rabble from my sight!
ARM. (*seizing his horse's reins*) No, no, by Heaven, I've nothing more to lose. —
Thou stir'st not, viceroy, from this spot, until
Thou dost me fullest justice. Knit thy brows,
And roll thine eyes — I fear not. Our distress
Is so extreme, so boundless, that we care
No longer for thine anger.
GESSL. Woman, hence!
Give way, or else my horse shall ride you down.
ARM. Well, let it! — there —
[*Throws her children and herself upon the ground before him.*

Here on the ground I lie,
I and my children. Let the wretched orphans
Be trodden by thy horse into the dust!
It will not be the worst that thou hast done.

HAR. Are you mad, woman?

ARM. (*continuing with vehemence*) Many a day thou hast
Trampled the emperor's lands beneath thy feet.
Oh, I am but a woman! Were I man,
I'd find some better thing to do, than here
Lie grovelling in the dust.

[*The music of the bridal party is again heard from the top of the pass, but more softly.*

GESSL. Where are my knaves?
Drag her away, lest I forget myself,
And do some deed I may repent me of.

HAR. My lord, the servants cannot force their way;
The pass is block'd up by a bridal train.

GESSL. Too mild a ruler am I to this people,
Their tongues are all too bold — nor have they yet
Been tamed to due submission, as they shall be.
I must take order for the remedy;
I will subdue this stubborn mood of theirs,
This braggart spirit of freedom I will crush,
I will proclaim a new law through the land;
I will —

[*An arrow pierces him, — he puts his hand on his heart, and is about to sink — with a feeble voice.*

Oh God, have mercy on my soul!

HAR. My lord! my lord! Oh God! What's this? Whence came it?

ARM. (*starts up*) Dead, dead! He reels, he falls! 'Tis in his heart!

HAR. (*springs from his horse*) Horror of horrors! Heavenly powers! Sir knight,

Address yourself for mercy to your God!
You are a dying man.

GESSL. That shot was Tell's.

[*He slides from his horse into the arms of* RUDOLPH DER HARRAS, *who lays him down upon the bench.* TELL *appears above upon the rocks.*

TELL. Thou know'st the marksman — I, and I alone.
Now are our homesteads free, and innocence
From thee is safe: thou'lt be our curse no more.

[TELL *disappears. People rush in.*

STUSSI. What is the matter? Tell me what has happen'd?

ARM. The viceroy's shot, — pierced by a crossbow bolt!

PEOPLE. (*running in*) Who has been shot?

[*While the foremost of the marriage party are coming on the stage, the hindmost are still upon the heights. The music continues.*

HAR. He's bleeding fast to death.
Away, for help — pursue the murderer!
Unhappy man, is this to be your end?
You would not listen to my warning words.

STUSSI. By Heaven, his cheek is pale! Life's ebbing fast.

MANY VOICES. Who did the deed?

HAR. What! Are the people mad,
That they make music to a murder? Silence!

[*Music breaks off suddenly. People continue to flock in.*

Speak, if you can, my lord. Have you no charge
To trust me with?

[GESSLER *makes signs with his hand, which he repeats with vehemence, when he finds they are not understood.*

Where shall I take you to?
To Küssnacht? What you say I can't make out.

Oh, do not grow impatient! Leave all thought
Of earthly things and make your peace with Heaven.
[*The whole marriage party gather round the dying man.*
STUSSI. See there! how pale he grows! Death's gathering now
About his heart; — his eyes grow dim and glazed.
ARM. (*holds up a child*) Look, children, how a tyrant dies!
HAR. Mad hag!
Have you no touch of feeling, that your eyes
Gloat on a sight so horrible as this?
Help me — take hold. What, will not one assist
To pull the torturing arrow from his breast?
WOMEN. What! touch the man whom God's own hand has struck!
HAR. All curses light on you! [*Draws his sword.*
STUSSI. (*seizes his arm*) Gently, sir knight!
Your power is at end. 'Twere best forbear.
Our country's foe has fallen. We will brook
No further violence. We are free men.
ALL. The country's free.
HAR. And is it come to this?
Fear and obedience at an end so soon?
[*To the soldiers of the guard who are thronging in.*
You see, my friends, the bloody piece of work
Has here been done. 'Tis now too late for help,
And to pursue the murderer were vain.
We've other things to think of. On to Küssnacht,
And let us save that fortress for the king!
For in a moment such as this, all ties
Of order, fealty, and faith, are rent,
And we can trust to no man's loyalty.
[*As he is going out with the soldiers, six* FRATRES MISERICORDIÆ *appear.*
ARM. Here comes the brotherhood of mercy. Room!

STUSSI. The victim's slain, and now the ravens stoop.

BROTHERS OF MERCY (*form a semicircle round the body, and sing in solemn tones*)

Death hurries on with hasty stride,
No respite man from him may gain,
He cuts him down, when life's full tide
Is throbbing strong in every vein.
Prepared or not the call to hear,
He must before his Judge appear.

[*While they are repeating the two last lines, the curtain falls.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.

A common near Altdorf. In the background, to the right, the Keep of Uri, with the scaffold still standing, as in the Third Scene of the First Act. To the left, the view opens upon numerous mountains, on all of which signal fires are burning. Day is breaking, and distant bells are heard ringing in several directions.

RUODI, KUONI, WERNI, MASTER MASON, *and many other country people, also women and children.*

RUODI. See there! The beacons on the mountain heights!

MASON. Hark how the bells above the forest toll!

RUODI. The enemy's routed.

MASON. And the forts are storm'd.

RUODI. And we of Uri, do we still endure
Upon our native soil the tyrant's keep?
Are we the last to strike for liberty?

MASON. Shall the yoke stand, that was to curb our necks?
Up! Tear it to the ground!
ALL. Down, down with it!
RUODI. Where is the Stier of Uri?
URI. Here. What would ye?
RUODI. Up to your tower, and wind us such a blast,
As shall resound afar, from peak to peak;
Rousing the echoes of each glen and hill,
To rally swiftly all the mountain men!
[*Exit* STIER OF URI. — *Enter* WALTER FÜRST.
FÜRST. Stay, stay, my friends! As yet we have not learn'd
What has been done in Unterwald and Schwytz.
Let's wait till we receive intelligence!
RUODI. Wait, wait for what? The accursed tyrant's dead,
And on us freedom's glorious day has dawn'd!
MASON. How! Are these flaming signals not enough,
That blaze on every mountain top around?
RUODI. Come all, fall to — come, men and women, all!
Destroy the scaffold! Burst the arches! Down,
Down with the walls, let not a stone remain!
MASON. Come, comrades, come! We built it, and we know
How best to hurl it down.
ALL. Come! Down with it!
[*They fall upon the building on every side.*
FÜRST. The floodgate's burst. They're not to be restrained.
[*Enter* MELCHTHAL *and* BAUMGARTEN.
MELCH. What! Stands the fortress still, when Sarnen lies
In ashes, and the Rossberg's in our hands?

FÜRST. You, Melchthal, here? D'ye bring us liberty?
Are all the cantons from our tyrants freed?
MELCH. We've swept them from the soil. Rejoice, my friend,
Now, at this very moment, while we speak,
There's not one tyrant left in Switzerland!
FÜRST. How did you get the forts into your power?
MELCH. Rudenz it was who by a bold assault
With manly valour mastered Sarnen's keep.
The Rossberg I had storm'd the night before.
But hear, what chanced. Scarce had we driven the foe
Forth from the keep, and given it to the flames,
That now rose crackling upward to the skies,
When from the blaze rush'd Diethelm, Gessler's page,
Exclaiming, "Lady Bertha will be burnt!"
FÜRST. Good heavens!
[*The beams of the scaffold are heard falling.*
MELCH. 'Twas she herself. Here had she been
By Gessler's orders secretly immured.
Up sprang Rudenz in frenzy. For even now
The beams and massive posts were crashing down,
And through the stifling smoke the piteous shrieks
Of the unhappy lady.
FÜRST. Is she saved?
MELCH. 'Twas not a time to hesitate or pause!
Had he been but our baron, and no more,
We should have been most chary of our lives;
But he was our confederate, and Bertha
Honoured the people. So, without a thought,
We risk'd the worst, and rush'd into the flames.
FÜRST. But is she saved?
MELCH. She is. Rudenz and I
Bore her between us from the blazing pile,
With crashing timbers toppling all around.
And when she had revived, the danger past,
And raised her eyes to look upon the sun,

The baron fell upon my breast; and then
A silent vow between us two was sworn,
A vow that, welded in yon furnace heat,
Will last through ev'ry shock of time and fate.

FÜRST. Where is the Landenberg?

MELCH. Across the Brünig.
'Twas not my fault he bore his sight away,
He who had robb'd my father of his eyes!
He fled — I followed — overtook him soon,
And dragg'd him to my father's feet. The sword
Already quiver'd o'er the caitiff's head,
When from the pity of the blind old man,
He wrung the life which, craven-like, he begged.
He swore URPHEDE,[1] never to return:
He'll keep his oath, for he has felt our arm.

FÜRST. Oh, well for you, you have not stain'd with blood
Our spotless victory!

CHILDREN. *(running across the stage with fragments of wood)* We're free! we're free!

FÜRST. Oh! what a joyous scene! These children will
Remember it when all their heads are gray.

[*Girls bring in the cap upon a pole. The whole stage is filled with people.*

RUODI. Here is the cap, to which we were to bow!

BAUM. What shall we do with it? Do you decide!

FÜRST. Heavens! 'Twas beneath this cap my grandson stood!

SEVERAL VOICES. Destroy the emblem of the tyrant's power!
Let it be burnt!

FÜRST. No. Rather be preserved;

[1] The URPHEDE was an oath of peculiar force. When a man, who was at feud with another, invaded his lands and was worsted, he often made terms with his enemy by swearing the *Urphede*, by which he bound himself to depart, and never to return with a hostile intention.

'Twas once the instrument of despots — now
'Twill of our freedom be a lasting sign.

[*Peasants, men, women, and children, some standing, others sitting upon the beams of the shattered scaffold, all picturesquely grouped, in a large semicircle.*

MELCH. Thus now, my friends, with light and merry hearts,
We stand upon the wreck of tyranny;
And gloriously the work has been fulfilled,
Which we at Rootli pledged ourselves to do.

FÜRST. No, not fulfilled. The work is but begun:
Courage and concord firm, we need them both;
For, be assured, the king will make all speed
To avenge his viceroy's death, and reinstate,
By force of arms, the tyrant we've expell'd.

MELCH. Why let him come, with all his armaments!
The foe's expelled that press'd us from within,
The foe without we are prepared to meet!

RUODI. The passes to our cantons are but few;
These with our bodies we will block, we will!

BAUM. Knit are we by a league will ne'er be rent,
And all his armies shall not make us quail.

[*Enter* RÖSSELMANN *and* STAUFFACHER.

RÖSSEL. (*speaking as he enters*) These are the awful judgments of the Lord!

PEAS. What is the matter?

RÖSSEL. In what times we live!

FÜRST. Say on, what is't? Ha, Werner, is it you?
What tidings?

PEAS. What's the matter?

RÖSSEL. Hear and wonder!

STAUFF. We are released from one great cause of dread.

RÖSSEL. The emperor is murdered.

FÜRST. Gracious Heaven!

[*Peasants rise up and throng round* STAUFFACHER.

ALL. Murder'd! — the emp'ror! What! The emp'ror! Hear!
MELCH. Impossible! How came you by the news?
STAUFF. 'Tis true! Near Bruck, by the assassin's hand,
King Albert fell. A most trustworthy man,
John Müller, from Schaffhausen, brought the news.
FÜRST. Who dared commit so horrible a deed?
STAUFF. The doer makes the deed more dreadful still;
It was his nephew, his own brother's son,
Duke John of Austria, who struck the blow.
MELCH. What drove him to so dire a parricide?
STAUFF. The emp'ror kept his patrimony back,
Despite his urgent importunities;
'Twas said, he meant to keep it for himself,
And with a mitre to appease the duke.
However this may be, the duke gave ear
To the ill counsel of his friends in arms;
And with the noble lords, Von Eschenbach,
Von Tegerfeld, Von Wart and Palm, resolved,
Since his demands for justice were despised,
With his own hands to take revenge at least.
FÜRST. But say — the dreadful deed, how was it done?
STAUFF. The king was riding down from Stein to Baden.
Upon his way to join the court at Rheinfeld, —
With him a train of high-born gentlemen,
And the young princes John and Leopold;
And when they'd reach'd the ferry of the Reuss,
The assassins forced their way into the boat,
To separate the emperor from his suite.
His Highness landed, and was riding on
Across a fresh plough'd field — where once, they say,
A mighty city stood in pagan times —
With Habsburg's ancient turrets full in sight,

That was the cradle of his princely race,
When Duke John plunged a dagger in his throat,
Palm ran him thro' the body with a lance,
And Eschenbach, to end him, clove his skull;
So down he sank, all weltering in his blood,
On his own soil, by his own kinsmen slain.
Those on the opposite bank beheld the deed,
But, parted by the stream, could only raise
An unavailing cry of loud lament.
A poor old woman, sitting by the way,
Raised him, and on her breast he bled to death.

MELCH. Thus has he dug his own untimely grave,
Who sought insatiably to grasp at all.

STAUFF. The country round is fill'd with dire alarm,
The passes are blockaded everywhere,
And sentinels on ev'ry frontier set;
E'en ancient Zurich barricades her gates,
That have stood open for these thirty years,
Dreading the murd'rers and th' avengers more.
For cruel Agnes comes, the Hungarian queen,
By all her sex's tenderness untouch'd,
Arm'd with the thunders of the ban, to wreak
Dire vengeance for her parent's royal blood
On the whole race of those that murder'd him, —
Their servants, children, children's children, — yea,
Upon the stones that built their castle walls.
Deep has she sworn a vow to immolate
Whole generations on her father's tomb,
And bathe in blood as in the dew of May.

MELCH. Is't known which way the murderers have fled?

STAUFF. No sooner had they done the deed, than they
Took flight, each following a different route,
And parted ne'er to see each other more.
Duke John must still be wand'ring in the mountains.

FÜRST. And thus their crime has borne no fruit for them.
Revenge bears never fruit. Itself, it is
The dreadful food it feeds on; its delight
Is murder — its satiety despair.
STAUFF. The assassins reap no profit by their crime;
But we shall pluck with unpolluted hands
The teeming fruits of their most bloody deed.
For we are ransomed from our heaviest fear;
The direst foe of liberty has fallen,
And, 'tis reported, that the crown will pass
From Habsburg's house into another line;
The empire is determined to assert
Its old prerogative of choice, I hear.
FÜRST *and several others.* Is any named?
STAUFF. The Count of Luxembourg's
Already chosen by the general voice.
FÜRST. 'Tis well we stood so staunchly by the empire!
Now we may hope for justice, and with cause.
STAUFF. The emperor will need some valiant friends.
He will 'gainst Austria's vengeance be our shield.
[*The peasantry embrace. Enter* SACRISTAN *with Imperial Messenger.*
SACRIST. Here are the worthy chiefs of Switzerland!
RÖSSEL. *and several others.* Sacrist, what news?
SACRIST. A courier brings this letter.
ALL. (*to* WALTER FÜRST) Open and read it.
FÜRST. (*reading*) "To the worthy men
Of Uri, Schwytz, and Unterwald, the Queen
Elizabeth sends grace and all good wishes!"
MANY VOICES. What wants the queen with us? Her reign is done.
FÜRST. (*reads*) "In the great grief and doleful widowhood,
In which the bloody exit of her lord

Has plunged the queen, still in her mind she bears
The ancient faith and love of Switzerland."
MELCH. She ne'er did that in her prosperity.
RÖSSEL. Hush, let us hear!
FÜRST. (*reads*) "And she is well assured,
Her people will in due abhorrence hold
The perpetrators of this damned deed.
On the three cantons, therefore, she relies,
That they in nowise lend the murderers aid;
But rather, that they loyally assist
To give them up to the avenger's hand,
Remembering the love and grace which they
Of old received from Rudolph's royal house."
[*Symptoms of dissatisfaction among the peasantry.*
MANY VOICES. The love and grace!
STAUFF. Grace from the father we, indeed, received,
But what have we to boast of from the son?
Did he confirm the charter of our freedom,
As all preceding emperors had done?
Did he judge righteous judgment, or afford
Shelter, or stay, to innocence oppress'd?
Nay, did he e'en give audience to the men
We sent to lay our grievances before him?
Not one of all these things did the king do,
And had we not ourselves achieved our rights
By our own stalwart hands, the wrongs we bore
Had never touch'd him. Gratitude to him!
Within these vales he sowed no seeds of that;
He stood upon an eminence — he might
Have been a very father to his people,
But all his aim and pleasure was to raise
Himself and his own house: and now may those
Whom he has aggrandised lament for him.
FÜRST. We will not triumph in his fall, nor now
Recall to mind the wrongs that we endured.
Far be't from us! Yet, that we should avenge
The sovereign's death, who never did us good,

And hunt down those who ne'er molested us,
Becomes us not, nor is our duty. Love
Must be a tribute free and unconstrain'd;
From all enforced duties death absolves,
And unto him we owe no further debt.

MELCH. And if the queen laments within her bower,
Accusing Heaven in sorrow's wild despair,
Here see a people, from its anguish freed,
To that same Heav'n send up its thankful praise.
Who would reap tears, must sow the seeds of love.

[*Exit the Imperial Courier.*

STAUFF. (*to the people*) But where is Tell? Shall he, our freedom's founder,
Alone be absent from our festival?
He did the most — endured the worst of all.
Come — to his dwelling let us all repair,
And bid the saviour of our country hail!

[*Exeunt omnes.*

SCENE II.

Interior of TELL'S *cottage. A fire burning on the hearth. The open door shows the scene outside.*

HEDWIG, WALTER, *and* WILHELM.

HEDW. My own dear boys! your father comes to-day;
He lives, is free, and we, and all are free;
The country owes its liberty to him!

WALT. And I, too, mother, bore my part in it!
I must be named with him. My father's shaft
Ran my life close, but yet I never flinch'd.

HEDW. (*embracing him*) Yes, yes, thou art restored to me again!
Twice have I seen thee given to my sad eyes,

Twice suffered all a mother's pangs for thee!
But this is past — I have you both, boys, both!
And your dear father will be back to-day.
[*A* MONK *appears at the door.*
WILH. See, mother, yonder stands a holy friar;
He comes for alms, no doubt.
HEDW. Go lead him in,
That we may give him cheer, and make him feel
That he has come into the house of joy.
[*Exit, and returns immediately with a cup.*
WILH. (*to the* MONK) Come in, good man. Mother will give you food!
WALT. Come in and rest, then go refresh'd away!
MONK. (*glancing around in terror, with unquiet looks*) Where am I? In what country? Tell me.
WALT. How!
Are you bewildered, that you know not where?
You are at Bürglen, in the land of Uri,
Just at the entrance of the Shechenthal.
MONK. (*to* HEDWIG) Are you alone? Your husband, is he here?
HEDW. I am expecting him. But what ails you, man?
There's something in your looks that omens ill!
Whoe'er you be, you are in want — take that.
[*Offers him the cup.*
MONK. Howe'er my sinking heart may yearn for food,
Nought will I taste till you have promised first —
HEDW. Touch not my garments, come not near me, monk!
You must stand farther back, if I'm to hear you.
MONK. Oh, by this hearth's bright hospitable blaze,
By your dear children's heads, which I embrace —
[*Grasps the boys.*

HEDW. Stand back, I say! What is your purpose, man?
Back from my boys! You are no monk, — no, no,
Beneath the robe you wear peace should abide,
But peace abides not in such looks as yours.
MONK. I am the wretchedest of living men.
HEDW. The heart is never deaf to wretchedness;
But your look freezes up my inmost soul.
WALT. (*springs up*) Mother, here's father!
HEDW. Oh, my God!
[*Is about to follow, trembles, and stops.*
WILH. (*running after his brother*) My father!
WALT. (*without*) Here, here once more!
WILH. (*without*) My father, my dear father!
TELL. (*without*) Yes, here once more! Where is your mother, boys? [*They enter.*
WALT. There at the door she stands, and can no further,
She trembles so with terror and with joy.
TELL. Oh, Hedwig, Hedwig, mother of my children,
God has been kind and helpful in our woes.
No tyrant's hand shall e'er divide us more.
HEDW. (*falling on his neck*) Oh, Tell, what anguish have I borne for thee!
[MONK *becomes attentive.*
TELL. Forget it now, and live for joy alone!
I'm here again with you! This is my cot!
I stand again upon mine own hearthstone!
WILH. But, father, where's your crossbow? Not with you?
TELL. Thou shalt not ever see it more, my boy.
Within a holy shrine it has been placed,
And in the chase shall ne'er be used again.
HEDW. Oh, Tell! Tell!
[*Steps back, dropping his hand.*
TELL. What alarms thee, dearest wife?

HEDW. How — how dost thou return to me? This hand —
Dare I take hold of it? This hand — Oh God!
TELL. (*with firmness and animation*) Has shielded you and set my country free;
Freely I raise it in the face of Heaven.
[MONK *gives a sudden start — he looks at him.*
Who is this friar here?
HEDW. Ah, I forgot him;
Speak thou with him; I shudder at his presence.
MONK. (*stepping nearer*) Are you the Tell who slew the governor?
TELL. Yes, I am he. I hide the fact from no man.
MONK. And you are Tell! Ah! it is God's own hand
That hath conducted me beneath your roof.
TELL. (*examining him closely*) You are no monk. Who are you?
MONK. You have slain
The governor, who did you wrong. I, too,
Have slain a foe who robb'd me of my rights.
He was no less your enemy than mine.
I've rid the land of him.
TELL. (*drawing back*) You are — oh, horror!
In — children, children — in, without a word,
Go, my dear wife! Go! Go! Unhappy man,
You should be —
HEDW. Heav'ns, who is it?
TELL. Do not ask.
Away! away! the children must not hear it.
Out of the house — away! You must not rest
'Neath the same roof with this unhappy man!
HEDW. Alas! What is it? Come.
[*Exit with the children.*
TELL. (*to the* MONK) You are the Duke
Of Austria — I know it. You have slain
The emperor, your uncle, and liege lord.

JOHN. He robb'd me of my patrimony.
TELL. How!
Slain him — your king, your uncle! And the earth
Still bears you! And the sun still shines on you!
JOHN. Tell, hear me, ere you —
TELL. Reeking with the blood
Of him that was your emperor, your kinsman,
Dare you set foot within my spotless house,
Dare to an honest man to show your face,
And claim the rites of hospitality?
JOHN. I hoped to find compassion at your hands.
You took, like me, revenge upon your foe!
TELL. Unhappy man! Dare you confound the crime
Of blood-imbrued ambition with the act
Forced on a father in mere self-defence?
Had you to shield your children's darling heads,
To guard your fireside's sanctuary — ward off
The last, the direst doom from all you loved?
To Heaven I raise my unpolluted hands,
To curse your act and you! I have avenged
That holy nature which you have profaned.
I have no part with you. You murdered, I
Have shielded all that was most dear to me.
JOHN. You cast me off to comfortless despair!
TELL. I shrink with horror while I talk with you.
Hence, on the dread career you have begun!
Cease to pollute the home of innocence!
[JOHN *turns to depart.*
JOHN. I cannot and I will not live this life!
TELL. And yet my soul bleeds for you. Gracious Heaven,
So young, of such a noble line, the grandson
Of Rudolph, once my lord and emperor,
An outcast — murderer — standing at my door,
The poor man's door — a suppliant, in despair!
[*Covers his face.*

JOHN. If you have power to weep, oh, let my fate
Move your compassion — it is horrible.
I am — say, rather was — a prince. I might
Have been most happy, had I only curb'd
The impatience of my passionate desires:
But envy gnaw'd my heart — I saw the youth
Of mine own cousin Leopold endow'd
With honour, and enrich'd with broad domains,
The while myself, of equal age with him,
In abject slavish nonage was kept back.
TELL. Unhappy man, your uncle knew you well,
When from you land and subjects he withheld!
You, by your mad and desperate act, have set
A fearful seal upon his wise resolve.
Where are the bloody partners of your crime?
JOHN. Where'er the avenging furies may have borne them;
I have not seen them since the luckless deed.
TELL. Know you the empire's ban is out, — that you
Are interdicted to your friends, and given
An outlaw'd victim to your enemies!
JOHN. Therefore I shun all public thoroughfares,
And venture not to knock at any door —
I turn my footsteps to the wilds, and through
The mountains roam, a terror to myself.
From mine own self I shrink with horror back,
If in a brook I see my ill-starr'd form.
If you have pity or a human heart —
[*Falls down before him.*
TELL. Stand up, stand up! I say.
JOHN. Not till you give
Your hand in promise of assistance to me.
TELL. Can I assist you? Can a sinful man?
Yet get ye up — how black soe'er your crime —
You are a man. I, too, am one. From Tell
Shall no one part uncomforted. I will
Do all that lies within my power.

JOHN. (*springs up and grasps him ardently by the hand*) Oh, Tell,
You save me from the terrors of despair.
TELL. Let go my hand! You must away. You cannot
Remain here undiscover'd, and, discover'd,
You cannot count on succour. Which way, then,
Would you be going? Where do you hope to find
A place of rest?
JOHN. Alas! I know not where.
TELL. Hear, then, what Heaven unto my heart suggests.
You must to Italy, — to Saint Peter's city —
There cast yourself at the Pope's feet, — confess
Your guilt to him, and ease your laden soul!
JOHN. Will he not to the avengers yield me up?
TELL. Whate'er he does, accept it as from God.
JOHN. But how am I to reach that unknown land?
I have no knowledge of the way, and dare not
Attach myself to other travellers.
TELL. I will describe the road, so mark me well!
You must ascend, keeping along the Reuss,
Which from the mountains dashes wildly down.
JOHN. (*in alarm*) What! See the Reuss? The witness of my deed!
TELL. The road you take lies through the river's gorge,
And many a cross proclaims where travellers
Have been by avalanches done to death.
JOHN. I have no fear for nature's terrors, so
I can appease the torments of my soul.
TELL. At every cross, kneel down and expiate
Your crime with burning penitential tears —
And if you 'scape the perils of the pass,
And are not whelm'd beneath the drifted snows,
That from the frozen peaks come sweeping down,

You'll reach the bridge that's drench'd with drizzling spray.
Then if it give not way beneath your guilt,
When you have left it safely in your rear,
Before you frowns the gloomy Gate of Rocks,
Where never sun did shine. Proceed through this,
And you will reach a bright and gladsome vale.
Yet must you hurry on with hasty steps,
You must not linger in the haunts of peace.

JOHN. O Rudolph, Rudolph, royal grandsire! thus
Thy grandson first sets foot within thy realms!

TELL. Ascending still, you gain the Gotthardt's heights,
Where are the tarns, the everlasting tarns,
That from the streams of heaven itself are fed;
There to the German soil you bid farewell,
And thence, with swift descent, another stream
Leads you to Italy, your promised land.

[*Ranz des Vaches sounded on Alp-horns is heard without.*

But I hear voices. Hence!

HEDW. (*hurrying in*) Where art thou, Tell?
My father comes, and in exulting bands
All the confederates approach.

JOHN. (*covering himself*) Woe's me!
I dare not tarry 'mong these happy men!

TELL. Go, dearest wife, and give this man to eat.
Spare not your bounty; for his road is long,
And one where shelter will be hard to find.
Quick — they approach!

HEDW. Who is he?

TELL. Do not ask!
And when he quits you, turn your eyes away,
So that they do not see which way he goes.

[DUKE JOHN *advances hastily toward* TELL, *but he beckons him aside and exit. When both have left the stage, the scene changes, and discloses in*

SCENE III.

The whole valley before TELL'S *house, the heights which enclose it occupied by peasants, grouped into tableaux. Some are seen crossing a lofty bridge, which crosses the Shechen.* WALTER FÜRST *with the two boys.* WERNER *and* STAUFFACHER *come forward. Others throng after them. When* TELL *appears, all receive him with loud cheers.*

ALL. Long live brave Tell, our shield, our saviour!

[*While those in front are crowding round* TELL, *and embracing him,* RUDENZ *and* BERTHA *appear. The former salutes the peasantry, the latter embraces* HEDWIG. *The music from the mountains continues to play. When it has stopped,* BERTHA *steps into the centre of the crowd.*

BERTH. Peasants! Confederates! Into your league
Receive me, who was happily the first
That found deliverance in the land of freedom.
To your brave hands I now entrust my rights.
Will you protect me as your citizen?

PEAS. Ay, that we will, with life and goods!

BERTH. 'Tis well!
And now to him (*turning to Rudenz*) I frankly give my hand,
A free Swiss maiden to a free Swiss man!

RUD. And from this moment all my serfs are free!

[*Music and the curtain falls.*

Demetrius

Demetrius

ACT I.

SCENE I.

THE DIET AT CRACOW.

On the rising of the curtain the Polish Diet is discovered, seated in the great senate hall. On a raised platform, elevated by three steps, and surmounted by a canopy, is the imperial throne, the escutcheons of Poland and Lithuania suspended on each side. The KING *seated upon the throne; on his right and left hand his ten royal officers standing on the platform. Below the platform the* BISHOPS, PALATINES, *and* CASTELLANS *seated on each side of the stage. Opposite to these stand the Provincial* DEPUTIES, *in a double line, uncovered. All armed. The* ARCHBISHOP OF GNESEN, *as the primate of the kingdom, is seated next the proscenium: his chaplain behind him, bearing a golden cross.*

ARCHBISHOP OF GNESEN. Thus then hath this tempestuous Diet been
Conducted safely to a prosperous close;
And king and commons part as cordial friends.
The nobles have consented to disarm,

And straight disband the dangerous Rocoss;[1]
Whilst our good king his sacred word has pledged,
That every just complaint shall have redress.
And now that all is peace at home, we may
Look to the things that claim our care abroad.
Is it the will of the most high Estates
That Prince Demetrius, who hath advanced
A claim to Russia's crown, as Ivan's son,
Should at their bar appear, and in the face
Of this august assembly prove his right?

CASTELLAN OF CRACOW. Honour and justice both demand he should;
It were unseemly to refuse his prayer.

BISHOP OF WERMELAND. The documents on which he rests have been
Examined, and are found authentic. We
May give him audience.

SEVERAL DEPUTIES. Nay! We must, we must!

LEO SAPIEHA. To hear is to admit his right.

ODOWALSKY. And not
To hear is to reject his claims unheard.

ARCHBISHOP OF GNESEN. Is it your will that he have audience?
I ask it for the second time — and third.

IMPERIAL CHANCELLOR. Let him stand forth before our throne!

SENATORS. And speak!

DEPUTIES. Yes, yes! Let him be heard!

[*The Imperial* GRAND MARSHAL *beckons with his baton to the doorkeeper, who goes out.*

LEO SAPIEHA. (*to the* CHANCELLOR) Write down, my lord,
That here I do protest against this step,
And all that may ensue therefrom, to mar
The peace of Poland's state and Moscow's crown.

[1] An insurrectionary muster of the nobles.

[*Enters* DEMETRIUS. *Advances some steps toward the throne, and makes three bows with his head uncovered, first to the* KING, *next to the* SENATORS, *and then to the* DEPUTIES, *who all severally answer with an inclination of the head. He then takes up his position so as to keep within his eye a great portion of the assemblage, and yet not to turn his back upon the throne.*

ARCHBISHOP OF GNESEN. Prince Dmitri, son of Ivan! if the pomp
Of this great Diet scare thee, or a sight
So noble and majestic chain thy tongue,
Thou may'st — for this the senate have allowed —
Choose thee a proxy, wheresoe'er thou list,
And do thy mission by another's lips.

DEMETRIUS. My lord archbishop, I stand here to claim
A kingdom, and the state of royalty.
'Twould ill beseem me should I quake before
A noble people, and its king and senate.
I ne'er have viewed a circle so august,
But the sight swells my heart within my breast
And not appals me. The more worthy ye,
To me ye are more welcome; I can ne'er
Address my claim to nobler auditory.

ARCHBISHOP OF GNESEN. The august republic
Is favourably bent.

DEMETRIUS. Most puissant king! Most worthy and most potent
Bishops and palatines, and my good lords,
The deputies of the august republic!
It gives me pause and wonder to behold
Myself, Czar Ivan's son, now stand before
The Polish people in their Diet here.
Both realms were sundered by a bloody hate,
And, whilst my father lived, no peace might be.

Yet now hath Heaven so ordered these events,
That I, his blood, who with my nurse's milk
Imbibed the ancestral hate, appear before you
A fugitive, compelled to seek my rights
Even here in Poland's heart. Then, ere I speak,
Forget magnanimously all rancours past,
And that the Czar, whose son I own myself,
Rolled war's red billows to your very homes.
I stand before you, sirs, a prince despoiled.
I ask protection. The oppressed may urge
A sacred claim on every noble breast.
And who in all earth's circuit shall be just,
If not a people great and valiant, — one
In plenitude of power so free, it needs
To render 'count but to itself alone,
And may, unchallenged, lend an open ear
And aiding hand to fair humanity.

ARCHBISHOP OF GNESEN. You do allege you are
Czar Ivan's son;
And truly, nor your bearing nor your speech
Gainsays the lofty title that you urge,
But shows us that you are indeed his son.
And you shall find that the republic bears
A generous spirit. She has never quailed
To Russia in the field! She loves, alike,
To be a noble foe — a cordial friend.

DEMETRIUS. Ivan Wasilowitch, the mighty Czar
Of Moscow, took five spouses to his bed,
In the long years that spared him to the throne.
The first, a lady of the heroic line
Of Romanoff, bare him Feodor, who reigned
After his father's death. One only son,
Dmitri, the last blossom of his strength,
And a mere infant when his father died,
Was born of Marfa, of Nagori's line.
Czar Feodor, a youth, alike effeminate
In mind and body, left the reins of power

To his chief equerry, Boris Godunow,
Who ruled his master with most crafty skill.
Feodor was childless, and his barren bride
Denied all prospect of an heir. Thus, when
The wily Boiar, by his fawning arts,
Had coiled himself into the people's favour,
His wishes soared as high as to the throne.
Between him and his haughty hopes there stood
A youthful prince, the young Demetrius
Iwanowitsch, who with his mother lived
At Uglitsch, where her widowhood was passed.
Now, when his fatal purpose was matured,
He sent to Uglitsch ruffians, charged to put
The Czarowitch to death.
One night, when all was hushed, the castle's wing,
Where the young prince, apart from all the rest,
With his attendants lay, was found on fire.
The raging flames ingulfed the pile; the prince
Unseen, unheard, was spirited away,
And all the world lamented him as dead.
All Moscow knows these things to be the truth.

ARCHBISHOP OF GNESEN. Yes, these are facts familiar to us all.

The rumour ran abroad, both far and near,
That Prince Demetrius perished in the flames
When Uglitsch was destroyed. And, as his death
Raised to the throne the Czar who fills it now,
Fame did not hesitate to charge on him
This murder foul and pitiless. But yet,
His death is not the business now in hand!
This prince is living still! He lives in you!
So runs your plea. Now bring us to the proofs!
Whereby do you attest that you are he?
What are the signs by which you shall be known?
How 'scaped you those were sent to hunt you down
And now, when sixteen years are passed, and you
Well-nigh forgot, emerge to light once more?

DEMETRIUS. 'Tis scarce a year since I have known myself;
I lived a secret to myself till then,
Surmising naught of my imperial birth.
I was a monk with monks, close pent within
The cloister's precincts, when I first began
To waken to a consciousness of self.
My impetuous spirit chafed against the bars,
And the high blood of princes began to course
In strange unbidden moods along my veins.
At length I flung the monkish cowl aside,
And fled to Poland, where the noble Prince
Of Sendomir, the generous, the good,
Took me as guest into his princely house,
And trained me up to noble deeds of arms.

ARCHBISHOP OF GNESEN. How? You still ignorant of what you were?
Yet ran the rumour then on every side,
That Prince Demetrius was still alive.
Czar Boris trembled on his throne, and sent
His sassafs to the frontiers, to keep
Sharp watch on every traveller that stirred.
Had not the tale its origin with you?
Did you not give the rumour birth yourself?
Had you not named to any that you were
Demetrius?

DEMETRIUS. I relate that which I know.
If a report went forth I was alive,
Then had some god been busy with the fame.
Myself I knew not. In the prince's house,
And in the throng of his retainers lost,
I spent the pleasant springtime of my youth.
In silent homage
My heart was vowed to his most lovely daughter.
Yet in those days it never dreamed to raise
Its wildest thoughts to happiness so high.
My passion gave offence to her betrothed,

The Castellan of Lemberg. He with taunts
Chafed me, and in the blindness of his rage
Forgot himself so wholly as to strike me.
Thus savagely provoked, I drew my sword;
He, blind with fury, rushed upon the blade,
And perished there by my unwitting hand.

MEISCHEK. Yes, it was even so.

DEMETRIUS. Mine was the worst mischance! A nameless youth,
A Russian and a stranger, I had slain
A grandee of the empire — in the house
Of my kind patron done a deed of blood,
And sent to death his son-in-law and friend.
My innocence availed not; not the pity
Of all his household, nor his kindness — his,
The noble Palatine's, — could save my life;
For it was forfeit to the law, that is,
Though lenient to the Poles, to strangers stern.
Judgment was passed on me — that judgment death.
I knelt upon the scaffold, by the block;
To the fell headsman's sword I bared my throat,
And in the act disclosed a cross of gold,
Studded with precious gems, which had been hung
About my neck at the baptismal font.
This sacred pledge of Christian redemption
I had, as is the custom of my people,
Worn on my neck concealed, where'er I went,
From my first hours of infancy; and now,
When from sweet life I was compelled to part,
I grasped it as my only stay, and pressed it
With passionate devotion to my lips.

[*The Poles intimate their sympathy by dumb show.*

The jewel was observed; its sheen and worth
Awakened curiosity and wonder.
They set me free, and questioned me; yet still
I could not call to memory a time
I had not worn the jewel on my person.

Now it so happened that three Boiars who
Had fled from the resentment of their Czar
Were on a visit to my lord at Sambor.
They saw the trinket, — recognised it by
Nine emeralds alternately inlaid
With amethysts, to be the very cross
Which Ivan Westislowsky at the font
Hung on the neck of the Czar's youngest son.
They scrutinised me closer, and were struck
To find me marked with one of nature's freaks,
For my right arm is shorter than my left.
Now, being closely plied with questions, I
Bethought me of a little psalter which
I carried from the cloister when I fled.
Within this book were certain words in Greek
Inscribed there by the Igumen himself.
What they imported was unknown to me,
Being ignorant of the language. Well, the psalter
Was sent for, brought, and the inscription read.
It bore that Brother Wasili Philaret
(Such was my cloister-name), who owned the book,
Was Prince Demetrius, Ivan's youngest son,
By Andrei, an honest Diak, saved
By stealth in that red night of massacre.
Proofs of the fact lay carefully preserved
Within two convents, which were pointed out.
On this the Boiars at my feet fell down,
Won by the force of these resistless proofs,
And hailed me as the offspring of their Czar.
So from the yawning gulfs of black despair
Fate raised me up to fortune's topmost heights.
And now the mists cleared off, and all at once
Memories on memories started into life
In the remotest background of the past.
And like some city's spires that gleam afar
In golden sunshine when naught else is seen,
So in my soul two images grew bright,

The loftiest sun-peaks in the shadowy past.
I saw myself escaping one dark night,
And a red lurid flame light up the gloom
Of midnight darkness as I looked behind me.
A memory 'twas of very earliest youth,
For what preceded or came after it,
In the long distance utterly was lost.
In solitary brightness there it stood,
A ghastly beacon-light on memory's waste.
Yet I remembered how, in later years,
One of my comrades called me in his wrath
Son of the Czar. I took it as a jest,
And with a blow avenged it at the time.
All this now flashed like lightning on my soul,
And told with dazzling certainty that I
Was the Czar's son, so long reputed dead.
With this one word the clouds that had perplexed
My strange and troubled life were cleared away.
Nor merely by these signs, for such deceive;
But in my soul, in my proud throbbing heart,
I felt within me coursed the blood of kings;
And sooner will I drain it drop by drop
Than bate one jot my title to the crown.

ARCHBISHOP OF GNESEN. And shall we trust a scroll
which might have found
Its way by merest chance into your hands,
Backed by the tale of some poor renegades?
Forgive me, noble youth! Your tone, I grant,
And bearing, are not those of one who lies;
Still you in this may be yourself deceived.
Well may the heart be pardoned that beguiles
Itself in playing for so high a stake.
What hostage do you tender for your word?

DEMETRIUS. I tender fifty, who will give their
oaths, —
All Piasts to a man, and free-born Poles
Of spotless reputation, — each of whom

Is ready to enforce what I have urged.
There sits the noble Prince of Sendomir,
And at his side the Castellan of Lublin;
Let them declare if I have spoke the truth.

ARCHBISHOP OF GNESEN. How seem these things to the august Estates?

To the enforcement of such numerous proofs
Doubt and mistrust, methinks, must needs give way.
Long has a creeping rumour filled the world
That Dmitri, Ivan's son, is still alive.
The Czar himself confirms it by his fears.
— Before us stands a youth, in age and mien
Even to the very freak that nature played,
The lost heir's counterpart, and of a soul
Whose noble stamp keeps rank with his high claims.
He left a cloister's precincts, urged by strange,
Mysterious promptings; and this monk-trained boy
Was straight distinguished for his knightly feats.
He shows a trinket which the Czarowitch
Once wore, and one that never left his side;
A written witness, too, by pious hands,
Gives us assurance of his princely birth;
And stronger still, from his unvarnished speech
And open brow truth makes his best appeal.
Such traits as these deceit doth never don;
It masks its subtle soul in vaunting words,
And in the high-glossed ornaments of speech.
No longer, then, can I withhold the title
Which he with circumstance and justice claims.
And, in the exercise of my old right,
I now, as primate, give him the first voice.

ARCHBISHOP OF LEMBERG. My voice goes with the primate's.

SEVERAL VOICES. So does mine.

SEVERAL PALATINES. And mine.

ODOWALSKY. And mine.

DEPUTIES. And all!

SAPIEHA. My gracious sirs!
Weigh well ere you decide! Be not so hasty!
It is not meet the council of the realm
Be hurried on to —
ODOWALSKY. There is nothing here
For us to weigh; all has been fully weighed.
The proofs demonstrate incontestably.
This is not Moscow, sirs! No despot here
Keeps our free souls in manacles. Here truth
May walk by day or night with brow erect.
I will not think, my lords, in Cracow here,
Here in the very Diet of the Poles,
That Moscow's Czar should have obsequious slaves.
DEMETRIUS. Oh, take my thanks, ye reverend senators!
That ye have lent your credence to these proofs;
And if I be indeed the man whom I
Protest myself, oh, then, endure not this
Audacious robber should usurp my seat,
Or longer desecrate that sceptre which
To me, as the true Czarowitch, belongs.
Yes, justice lies with me, — you have the power.
'Tis the most dear concern of every state
And throne, that right should everywhere prevail,
And all men in the world possess their own.
For there, where justice holds uncumbered sway,
There each enjoys his heritage secure,
And over every house and every throne
Law, truth, and order keep their angel watch.
It is the keystone of the world's wide arch,
The one sustaining and sustained by all,
Which, if it fail, brings all in ruin down.
(*Answers of* SENATORS *giving assent to* DEMETRIUS.)
DEMETRIUS. Oh, look on me, renowned Sigismund!
Great king, on thine own bosom turn thine eyes.
And in my destiny behold thine own.

Thou, too, hast known the rude assaults of fate;
Within a prison camest thou to the world;
Thy earliest glances fell on dungeon walls.
Thou, too, hadst need of friends to set thee free,
And raise thee from a prison to a throne.
These didst thou find. That noble kindness thou
Didst reap from them, oh, testify to me.
And you, ye grave and honoured councillors,
Most reverend bishops, pillars of the Church,
Ye palatines and castellans of fame,
The moment has arrived, by one high deed,
To reconcile two nations long estranged.
Yours be the glorious boast, that Poland's power
Hath given the Muscovites their Czar, and in
The neighbour who oppressed you as a foe
Secure an ever-grateful friend. And you,
The deputies of the august republic,
Saddle your steeds of fire! Leap to your seats!
To you expand high fortune's golden gates;
I will divide the foeman's spoil with you.
Moscow is rich in plunder; measureless,
In gold and gems, the treasures of the Czar;
I can give royal guerdons to my friends,
And I will give them, too. When I, as Czar,
Set foot within the Kremlin, then, I swear,
The poorest of you all, that follows me,
Shall robe himself in velvet and in sables,
With costly pearls his housings shall he deck,
And silver be the metal of least worth,
That he shall shoe his horses' hoofs withal.

[*Great commotion among the* DEPUTIES. KORELA, *Hetman of the Cossacks, declares himself ready to put himself at the head of an army.*

ODOWALSKY. How! shall we leave the Cossack to despoil us
At once of glory and of booty both?
We've made a truce with Tartar and with Turk,

And from the Swedish power have naught to fear.
Our martial spirit has been wasting long
In slothful peace; our swords are red with rust.
Up! and invade the kingdom of the Czar,
And win a grateful and true-hearted friend,
Whilst we augment our country's might and glory.
MANY DEPUTIES. War! War with Moscow!
OTHERS. Be it so resolved!
On to the votes at once!
SAPIEHA. (*rises*) Grand marshal, please
To order silence! I desire to speak.
A CROWD OF VOICES. War! War with Moscow.
SAPIEHA. Nay, I will be heard.
Ho, marshal, do your duty!
[*Great tumult within and outside the hall.*
GRAND MARSHAL. 'Tis, you see,
Quite fruitless.
SAPIEHA. What? The marshal's self suborned?
Is this our Diet, then, no longer free?
Throw down your staff, and bid this brawling cease;
I charge you, on your office, to obey!
[*The* GRAND MARSHAL *casts his baton into the centre of the hall; the tumult abates.*
What whirling thoughts, what mad resolves are these?
Stand we not now at peace with Moscow's Czar?
Myself, as your imperial envoy, made
A treaty to endure for twenty years;
I raised this right hand, that you see, aloft
In solemn pledge, within the Kremlin's walls;
And fairly hath the Czar maintained his word.
What is sworn faith? what compacts, treaties, when
A solemn Diet tramples on them all?
DEMETRIUS. Prince Leo Sapieha! You concluded
A bond of peace, you say, with Moscow's Czar?
That did you not; for I, I am that Czar.
In me is Moscow's majesty; I am
The son of Ivan, and his rightful heir.

Would the Poles treat with Russia for a peace,
Then must they treat with me! Your compact's null,
As being made with one whose title's null.
ODOWALSKY. What reck we of your treaty? So we willed
When it was made — our wills are changed to-day.
SAPIEHA. Is it, then, come to this? If none beside
Will stand for justice, then, at least, will I.
I'll rend the woof of cunning into shreds,
And lay its falsehoods open to the day.
Most reverend primate! art thou, canst thou be
So simple-souled, or canst thou so dissemble?
Are ye so credulous, my lords? My liege,
Art thou so weak? Ye know not — will not know,
Ye are the puppets of the wily Waywode
Of Sendomir, who reared this spurious Czar,
Whose measureless ambition, while we speak,
Clutches in thought the spoils of Moscow's wealth.
Is't left for me to tell you that even now
The league is made and sworn betwixt the twain, —
The pledge the Waywode's youngest daughter's hand?
And shall our great republic blindly rush
Into the perils of an unjust war,
To aggrandise the Waywode, and to crown
His daughter as the empress of the Czar?
There's not a man he has not bribed and bought.
He means to rule the Diet, well I know;
I see his faction rampant in this hall,
And, as 'twere not enough that he controlled
The Seym Walmy by a majority,
He's girt the Diet with three thousand horse,
And all Cracow is swarming like a hive
With his sworn feudal vassals. Even now
They throng the halls and chambers where we sit,
To hold our liberty of speech in awe.

Yet stirs no fear in my undaunted heart;
And while the blood keeps current in my veins,
I will maintain the freedom of my voice!
Let those who think like men come stand by me!
Whilst I have life shall no resolve be passed
That is at war with justice and with reason.
'Twas I that ratified the peace with Moscow,
And I will hazard life to see it kept.

ODOWALSKY. Give him no further hearing! Take the votes!

[*The* BISHOP OF CRACOW *and* WILNA *rise, and descend each to his own side, to collect the votes.*

MANY. War, war with Moscow!

ARCHBISHOP OF GNESEN. (*to* SAPIEHA) Noble sir, give way!
You see the mass are hostile to your views;
Then do not force a profitless division!

IMPERIAL HIGH CHANCELLOR. (*descends from the throne to* SAPIEHA)
The king entreats you will not press the point,
Sir Waywode, to division in the Diet.

DOORKEEPER. (*aside to* ODOWALSKY) Keep a bold front, and fearless — summon those
That wait without. All Cracow stands by you.

IMPERIAL GRAND MARSHAL. (*to* SAPIEHA) Such excellent decrees have passed before;
Oh, cease, and for their sake, so fraught with good,
Unite your voice with the majority!

BISHOP OF CRACOW. (*has collected the votes on his side*)
On this right bench are all unanimous.

SAPIEHA. And let them to a man! Yet I say no!
I urge my veto — I break up the Diet.
Stay further progress! Null and void are all
The resolutions passed —

[*General commotion; the* KING *descends from the throne, the barriers are broken down, and there arises a tumultuous uproar.* DEPUTIES *draw their swords, and threaten* SAPIEHA *with them. The* BISHOPS *interpose, and protect him with their stoles.*

Majority?
What is it? The majority is madness;
Reason has still ranked only with the few.
What cares he for the general weal that's poor?
Has the lean beggar choice, or liberty?
To the great lords of earth, that hold the purse,
He must for bread and raiment sell his voice.
'Twere meet that voices should be weighed, not counted.
Sooner or later must the state be wrecked,
Where numbers sway and ignorance decides.

ODOWALSKY. Hark to the traitor!—

DEPUTIES. Hew him into shreds!
Down with him!

ARCHBISHOP OF GNESEN. (*snatches the crucifix out of his chaplain's hand and interposes*)
Peace, peace!
Shall native blood be in the Diet shed?
Prince Sapieha! be advised! [*To the* BISHOPS.
Bring him away,
And interpose your bosoms as his shield!
Through this side door remove him quietly,
Or the wild mob will tear him limb from limb!

[SAPIEHA, *still casting looks of defiance, is forced away by the* BISHOPS, *whilst the* ARCHBISHOPS OF GNESEN *and* LEMBERG *keep the* DEPUTIES *at bay. Amidst violent tumult and clashing of arms, the hall is emptied of all but* DEMETRIUS, MEISCHEK, ODOWALSKY, *and the Hetman of the Cossacks.*

ODOWALSKY. That point miscarried,—
Yet shall you not lack aid because of this:

If the republic holds the peace with Moscow,
At our own charges we shall push your claims.
KORELA. Who ever could have dreamed, that he alone
Would hold his ground against the assembled Diet?
MEISCHEK. The king! the king!
[*Enter* KING SIGISMUND, *attended by the* LORD HIGH CHANCELLOR, *the* GRAND MARSHAL, *and several* BISHOPS.
KING. Let me embrace you, prince!
At length the high republic does you justice;
My heart has done so long, and many a day.
Your fate doth move me deeply, as, indeed,
What monarch's heart but must be moved by it?
DEMETRIUS. The past, with all its sorrows, is forgot;
Here on your breast I feel new life begin.
KING. I love not many words; yet what a king
May offer, who has vassals richer far
Than his poor self, that do I offer you.
You have been witness of an untoward scene,
But deem not ill of Poland's realm because
A tempest jars the vessel of the state.
MEISCHEK. When winds are wild the steersman backs his helm
And makes for port with all the speed he may.
KING. The Diet is dissolved. Although I wished,
I could not break the treaty with the Czar.
But you have powerful friends; and if the Pole,
At his own risk, take arms on your behalf,
Or if the Cossack choose to venture war,
They are free men, I cannot say them nay.
MEISCHEK. The whole Rocoss is under arms already.
Please it but you, my liege, the angry stream
That raved against your sovereignty may turn
Its wrath on Moscow, leaving you unscathed.
KING. The best of weapons Russia's self will give thee;

Thy surest buckler is the people's heart.
By Russia only Russia will be vanquished.
Even as the Diet heard thee speak to-day,
Speak thou at Moscow to thy subjects, prince.
So chain their hearts, and thou wilt be their king.
In Sweden I by right of birth ascended
The throne of my inheritance in peace;
Yet did I lose the kingdom of my sires
Because my people's hearts were not with me.

Enter MARINA.

MEISCHEK. My gracious liege, here, kneeling at your feet,
Behold Marina, youngest of my daughters;
The prince of Moscow offers her his heart.
Thou art the stay and pillar of our house,
And only from thy royal hand 'tis meet
That she receive her spouse and sovereign.
[MARINA *kneels to the* KING.

KING. Well, if you wish it, cousin, gladly I
Will do the father's office to the Czar.
[*To* DEMETRIUS, *giving him* MARINA'S *hand.*
Thus do I bring you, in this lovely pledge,
High fortune's blooming goddess; and may these
Old eyes be spared to see this gracious pair
Sit in imperial state on Moscow's throne.

MARINA. My liege, I humbly thank your Grace, and shall
Esteem me still your slave where'er I be.

KING. Rise up, Czaritza! This is not a place
For you, the plighted bridemaid of the Czar;
For you, the daughter of my foremost Waywode.
You are the youngest of your sisters; yet
Your spirit wings a high and glorious course,
And nobly grasps the top of sovereignty.

DEMETRIUS. Be thou, great monarch, witness of my oath,
As, prince to prince, I pledge it here to you!
This noble lady's hand I do accept
As fortune's dearest pledge, and swear that, soon
As on my father's throne I take my seat,
I'll lead her home in triumph as my bride,
With all the state that fits a mighty queen.
And, for a dowry, to my bride I give
The principalities Pleskow and Great Neugart,
With all towns, hamlets, and in-dwellers there,
With all the rights and powers of sovereignty,
In absolute possession evermore;
And this, my gift, will I as Czar confirm
In my free city, Moscow. Furthermore,
As compensation to her noble sire
For present charges, I engage to pay
A million ducats, Polish currency.
So help me God, and all his saints, as I
Have truly sworn this oath, and shall fulfil it.

KING. You will do so; you never will forget
For what you are the noble Waywode's debtor;
Who, for your wishes, perils his sure wealth,
And, for your hopes, a child his heart adores,
A friend so rare is to be rarely prized!
Then when your hopes are crowned forget not ever
The steps by which you mounted to the throne,
Nor with your garments let your heart be changed!
Think, that in Poland first you knew yourself, —
That this land gave you birth a second time.

DEMETRIUS. I have been nurtured in adversity;
And learned to reverence the beauteous bond
Which links mankind with sympathies of love.

KING. But now you enter on a realm where all —
Use, custom, morals — are untried and strange,
In Poland here reigns freedom absolute;
The king himself, although in pomp supreme,

Must ofttime be the serf of his noblesse;
But there the father's sacred power prevails,
And in the subject finds a passive slave.
DEMETRIUS. That glorious freedom which surrounds me here
I will transplant into my native land,
And turn these bond-serfs into glad-souled men;
Not o'er the souls of slaves will I bear rule.
KING. Do naught in haste; but by the time be led!
Prince, ere we part, three lessons take from me,
And truly follow them when thou art king.
It is a king that gives them, old and tried,
And they may prove of profit to thy youth.
DEMETRIUS. Oh, share thy wisdom with me! Thou hast won
The reverence of a free and mighty people;
What must I do to earn so fair a prize?
KING. You come from a strange land,
Borne on the weapons of a foreign foe;
This first felt wrong thou hast to wash away.
Then bear thee like a genuine son of Moscow,
With reverence due to all her usages.
Keep promise with the Poles, and value them,
For thou hast need of friends on thy new throne:
The arm that placed thee there can hurl thee down.
Esteem them honourably, yet ape them not;
Strange customs thrive not in a foreign soil.
And, whatsoe'er thou dost, revere thy mother —
You'll find a mother —
DEMETRIUS. Oh, my liege!
KING. High claim
Hath she upon thy filial reverence.
Do her all honour. 'Twixt thy subjects and
Thyself she stands, a sacred, precious link.
No human law o'errides the imperial power;
Nothing but nature may command its awe;

Nor can thy people own a surer pledge
That thou art gentle, than thy filial love.
I say no more. Much yet is to be done,
Ere thou mak'st booty of the golden fleece.
Expect no easy victory!
Czar Boris rules with strong and skilful hand;
You take the field against no common man.
He that by merit hath achieved the throne
Is not puffed from his seat by popular breath;
His deeds do serve to him for ancestors.
To your good fortune I commend you now;
Already twice, as by a miracle,
Hath it redeemed you from the grasp of death;
'Twill put the finish on its work, and crown you.

[*Exeunt omnes but* MARINA *and* ODOWALSKY.

ODOWALSKY. Say, lady, how have I fulfilled my charge?
Truly and well, and wilt thou laud my zeal?

MARINA. 'Tis, Odowalsky, well we are alone;
Matters of weight have we to canvass which
'Tis meet the prince know nothing of. May he
Pursue the voice divine that goads him on!
If in himself he hath belief, the world
Will catch the flame, and give him credence too.
He must be kept in that vague, shadowing mist
Which is a fruitful mother of great deeds,
While we see clear, and act in certainty.
He lends the name — the inspiration; we
Must bear the brain, the shaping thought, for him;
And when, by art and craft, we have ensured
The needful levies, let him still dream on,
And think they dropped, to aid him, from the clouds.

ODOWALSKY. Give thy commands: I live but for thy service.
Think'st thou this Muscovite or his affairs
Concern my thoughts? 'Tis thou, thou and thy glory,
For which I will adventure life and all.

For me no fortune blossoms; friendless, landless,
I dare not let my hopes aspire to thee.
Thy grace I may not win, but I'll deserve it.
To make thee great be my one only aim;
Then, though another should possess thee, still
Thou wilt be mine — being what I have made thee.

MARINA. Therefore my whole heart do I pledge to thee;
To thee I trust the acting of my thoughts.
The king doth mean us false. I read him through.
'Twas a concerted farce with Sapieha,
A juggle, all! 'Twould please him well, belike,
To see my father's power, which he dreads deeply,
Enfeebled in this enterprise — the league
Of the noblesse, which shook his heart with fear,
Drawn off in this campaign on foreign bounds,
While he himself sits neutral in the fray.
He thinks to share our fortune, if we win;
And if we lose, he hopes with greater ease
To fix on us the bondage of his yoke.
We stand alone. This die is cast. If he
Cares for himself, we shall be selfish too.
You lead the troops to Kioff. There let them swear
Allegiance to the prince, and unto me; —
Mark you, to me! 'Tis needful for our ends.
I want your eye, and not your arm alone.

ODOWALSKY. Command me — speak —

MARINA. You lead the Czarowitch.
Keep your eye on him; stir not from his side,
Render me 'count of every step he makes.

ODOWALSKY. Rely on me, he'll never cast us off.

MARINA. No man is grateful. Once his throne is sure,
He'll not be slow to cast our bonds aside.
The Russian hates the Pole — must hate him ever;
No bond of amity can link their hearts.

Enter OPALINSKY, BIELSKY, *and several Polish noblemen.*

OPALINSKY. Fair patron, get us gold, and we march with you,
This lengthened Diet has consumed our all.
Let us have gold, we'll make thee Russia's queen.
MARINA. The Bishop of Kaminieck and Culm
Lends money on the pawn of land and serfs.
Sell, barter, pledge the hamlets of your boors,
Turn all to silver, horses, means of war!
War is the best of chapmen. He transmutes
Iron into gold. Whate'er you now may lose
You'll find in Moscow twenty-fold again.
BIELSKY. Two hundred more wait in the tavern yonder;
If you will show yourself, and drain a cup
With them, they're yours, all yours — I know them well.
MARINA. Expect me! You shall introduce me to them.
OPALINSKY. 'Tis plain that you were born to be a queen.
MARINA. I was, and therefore I must be a queen.
BIELSKY. Ay, mount the snow-white steed, thine armour on,
And so, a second Vanda, lead thy troops,
Inspired by thee, to certain victory.
MARINA. My spirit leads you. War is not for women.
The rendezvous is in Kioff. Thither my father
Will lead a levy of three thousand horse.
My sister's husband gives two thousand more,
And the Don sends a Cossack host in aid.
Do you all swear you will be true to me?
ALL. All, all — we swear! [*Draw their swords.*
Vivat Marina, Russiæ Regina!
[MARINA *tears her veil in pieces, and divides it among them. Exeunt omnes but* MARINA.

Enter MEISCHEK.

MARINA. Wherefore so sad, when fortune smiles on us,
When every step thrives to our utmost wish,
And all around are arming in our cause?
MEISCHEK. 'Tis even because of this, my child! All, all
Is staked upon the cast. Thy father's means
Are in these warlike preparations swamped.
I have much cause to ponder seriously;
Fortune is false, uncertain the result.
Mad, venturous girl, what hast thou brought me to?
What a weak father have I been, that I
Did not withstand thy importunities!
I am the richest Waywode of the empire,
The next in honour to the king. Had we
But been content to be so, and enjoyed
Our stately fortunes with a tranquil soul!
Thy hopes soared higher — not for thee sufficed
The moderate station which thy sisters won.
Thou wouldst attain the loftiest mark that can
By mortals be achieved, and wear a crown.
I, thy fond, foolish father, longed to heap
On thee, my darling one, all glorious gains,
So by thy prayers I let myself be fooled,
And peril my sure fortunes on a chance.
MARINA. How? My dear father, dost thou rue thy goodness?
Who with the meaner prize can live content,
When o'er his head the noblest courts his grasp?
MEISCHEK. Thy sisters wear no crowns, yet they are happy.
MARINA. What happiness is that to leave the home
Of the Waywode, my father, for the house
Of some count palatine, a grateful bride?
What do I gain of new from such a change?

And can I joy in looking to the morrow
When it brings naught but what was stale to-day ?
Oh, tasteless round of petty, worn pursuits !
Oh, wearisome monotony of life !
Are they a guerdon for high hopes, high aims ?
Or love or greatness I must have : all else
Are unto me alike indifferent.
Smooth off the trouble from thy brow, dear father !
Let's trust the stream that bears us on its breast,
Think not upon the sacrifice thou makest,
Think on the prize, the goal that's to be won —
When thou shalt see thy daughter robed in state,
In regal state, aloft on Moscow's throne,
And thy son's sons the rulers of the world !

MEISCHEK. I think of naught, see naught, but thee, my child,
Girt with the splendours of the imperial crown.
Thou'rt bent to have it ; I cannot gainsay thee.

MARINA. Yet one request, my dearest, best of fathers,
I pray you grant me !

MEISCHEK. Name thy wish, my child.

MARINA. Shall I remain shut up at Sambor with
The fires of boundless longing in my breast ?
Beyond the Dnieper will my die be cast,
While boundless space divides me from the spot ;
Can I endure it ? Oh, the impatient spirit
Will lie upon the rack of expectation
And measure out this monstrous length of space
With groans and anxious throbbings of the heart.

MEISCHEK. What dost thou wish ? What is it thou wouldst have ?

MARINA. Let me abide the issue in Kioff !
There I can gather tidings at their source.
There on the frontier of both kingdoms —

MEISCHEK. Thy spirit's over-bold. Restrain it, child !

MARINA. Yes, thou dost yield, — thou'lt take me with thee, then ?

MEISCHEK. Thou rulest me. Must I not do thy will ?

MARINA. My own dear father, when I am Moscow's queen,
Kioff, you know, must be our boundary.
Kioff must then be mine, and thou shalt rule it.

MEISCHEK. Thou dreamest, girl! Already the great Moscow
Is for thy soul too narrow; thou, to grasp
Domains, wilt strip them from thy native land.

MARINA. Kioff belonged not to our native land;
There the Varegers ruled in days of yore.
I have the ancient chronicles by heart;
'Twas from the Russian empire wrenched by force.
I will restore it to its former crown.

MEISCHEK. Hush, hush! The Waywode must not hear such talk. [*Trumpet without.*
They're breaking up.

ACT II.

SCENE I.

A Greek convent in a bleak district near the sea Belozero. A train of nuns, in black robes and veils, passes over the back of the stage. MARFA, *in a white veil, stands apart from the others, leaning on a tombstone.* OLGA *steps out from the train, remains gazing at her for a time, and then advances to her.*

OLGA. And does thy heart not urge thee forth with us
To taste reviving nature's opening sweets ?
The glad sun comes, the long, long night retires,

The ice melts in the streams, and soon the sledge
Will to the boat give place and summer swallow.
The world awakes once more, and the new joy
Woos all to leave their narrow cloister cells
For the bright air and freshening breath of spring.
And wilt thou only, sunk in lasting grief,
Refuse to share the general exultation?

MARFA. On with the rest, and leave me to myself!
Let those rejoice who still have power to hope.
The time that puts fresh youth in all the world
Brings naught to me; to me the past is all,
My hopes, my joys, are with the things that were.

OLGA. Dost thou still mourn thy son — still, still lament
The sovereignty which thou hast lost? Does time,
Which pours a balm on every wounded heart,
Lose all its potency with thee alone?
Thou wert the empress of this mighty realm,
The mother of a blooming son. He was
Snatched from thee by a dreadful destiny;
Into this dreary convent wert thou thrust,
Here on the verge of habitable earth.
Full sixteen times since that disastrous day
The face of nature hath renewed its youth;
Still have I seen no change come over thine,
That looked a grave amid a blooming world.
Thou'rt like some moonless image, carved in stone
By sculptor's chisel, that doth ever keep
The selfsame fixed unalterable mien.

MARFA. Yes, time, fell time, hath signed and set me up
As a memorial of my dreadful fate.
I will not be at peace, will not forget.
That soul must be of poor and shallow stamp
Which takes a cure from time — a recompense
For what can never be compensated!
Nothing shall buy my sorrow from me. No,

As heaven's vault still goes with the wanderer,
Girds and environs him with boundless grasp,
Turn where he will, by sea or land, so goes
My anguish with me, wheresoe'er I turn;
It hems me round, like an unbounded sea;
My ceaseless tears have failed to drain its depths.

OLGA. Oh, see! what news can yonder boy have brought,
The sisters round him throng so eagerly?
He comes from distant shores, where homes abound,
And brings us tidings from the land of men.
The sea is clear, the highways free once more.
Art thou not curious to learn his news?
Though to the world we are as good as dead,
Yet of its changes willingly we hear,
And, safe upon the shore, with wonder mark
The roar and ferment of the trampling waves.

[NUNS *come down the stage with a* FISHER BOY.

XENIA — HELENA. Speak, speak, and tell us all the news you bring.

ALEXIA. Relate what's passing in the world beyond.

FISHER BOY. Good, pious ladies, give me time to speak!

XENIA. Is't war — or peace?

ALEXIA. Who's now upon the throne?

FISHER BOY. A ship is to Archangel just come in
From the north pole, where everything is ice.

OLGA. How came a vessel into that wild sea?

FISHER BOY. It is an English merchantman, and it
Has found a new way out to get to us.

ALEXIA. What will not man adventure for his gain?

XENIA. And so the world is nowhere to be barred!

FISHER BOY. But that's the very smallest of the news.
'Tis something very different moves the world.

ALEXIA. Oh, speak and tell us!

OLGA. Say, what has occurred?
FISHER BOY. We live to hear strange marvels nowadays:
The dead rise up, and come to life again.
OLGA. Explain yourself.
FISHER BOY. Prince Dmitri, Ivan's son,
Whom we have mourned for dead these sixteen years,
Is now alive, and has appeared in Poland.
OLGA. The prince alive?
MARFA. (*starting*) My son!
OLGA. Compose thyself!
Calm down thy heart till we have learned the whole.
ALEXIA. How can this possibly be so, when he
Was killed, and perished in the flames at Uglitsch?
FISHER BOY. He managed somehow to escape the fire,
And found protection in a monastery.
There he grew up in secrecy, until
His time was come to publish who he was.
OLGA. (*to* MARFA) You tremble, princess! You grow pale!
MARFA. I know
That it must be delusion, yet so little
Is my heart steeled 'gainst fear and hope e'en now,
That in my breast it flutters like a bird.
OLGA. Why should it be delusion? Mark his words!
How could this rumour spread without good cause?
FISHER BOY. Without good cause? The Lithuanians
And Poles are all in arms upon his side.
The Czar himself quakes in his capital.
[MARFA *is compelled by her emotion to lean upon* OLGA *and* ALEXIA.
XENIA. Speak on, speak, tell us everything you know.

ALEXIA. And tell us, too, of whom you stole the news.

FISHER BOY. I stole the news? A letter has gone forth
To every town and province from the Czar.
This letter the Posadmik of our town
Read to us all, in open market-place.
It bore, that busy schemers were abroad,
And that we should not lend their tales belief.
But this made us believe them; for, had they
Been false, the Czar would have despised the lie.

MARFA. Is this the calm I thought I had achieved?
And clings my heart so close to temporal things,
That a mere word can shake my inward soul?
For sixteen years have I bewailed my son,
And yet at once believe that still he lives.

OLGA. Sixteen long years thou'st mourned for him as dead,
And yet his ashes thou hast never seen!
Naught countervails the truth of the report.
Nay, does not Providence watch o'er the fate
Of kings and monarchies? Then welcome hope:
More things befall than thou canst comprehend,
Who can set limits to the Almighty's power?

MARFA. Shall I turn back to look again on life,
To which long since I spoke a sad farewell?
It was not with the dead my hopes abode.
Oh, say no more of this. Let not my heart
Hang on this phantom hope! Let me not lose
My darling son a second time. Alas!
My peace of mind is gone, — my dream of peace.
I cannot trust these tidings, — yet, alas,
I can no longer dash them from my soul!
Woe's me, I never lost my son till now.
Oh, now I can no longer tell if I
Shall seek him 'mongst the living or the dead,

Tossed on the rock of never-ending doubt.

[*A bell sounds, — the sister* PORTERESS *enters.*

OLGA. Why has the bell been sounded, sister, say?

PORTERESS. The lord archbishop waits without; he brings
A message from the Czar, and craves an audience.

OLGA. Does the archbishop stand within our gates?
What strange occurrence can have brought him here?

XENIA. Come all, and give him greeting as befits.

[*They advance toward the gate as the* ARCHBISHOP *enters; they all kneel before him, and he makes the sign of the Greek cross over them.*

IOB. The kiss of peace I bring you in the name
Of Father, Son, and of the Holy Ghost,
Proceeding from the Father!

OLGA. Sir, we kiss
In humblest reverence thy paternal hand!
Command thy daughters!

IOB. My mission is addressed to Sister Marfa.

OLGA. See, here she stands, and waits to know thy will. [*All the* NUNS *withdraw.*

IOB. It is the mighty prince who sends me here;
Upon his distant throne he thinks of thee;
For as the sun, with his great eye of flame,
Sheds light and plenty all abroad the world,
So sweeps the sovereign's eye on every side;
Even to the farthest limits of his realm
His care is wakeful and his glance is keen.

MARFA. How far his arm can strike I know too well.

IOB. He knows the lofty spirit fills thy soul,
And therefore feels indignantly the wrong
A bold-faced villain dares to offer thee.
Learn, then, in Poland, an audacious churl,
A renegade, who broke his monkish vows,
Laid down his habit, and renounced his God,
Doth use the name and title of thy son,

Whom death snatched from thee in his infancy.
The shameless varlet boasts him of thy blood,
And doth affect to be Czar Ivan's son;
A Waywode breaks the peace; from Poland leads
This spurious monarch, whom himself created,
Across our frontiers, with an armed power:
So he beguiles the Russians' faithful hearts,
And lures them on to treason and revolt.
The Czar,
With pure, paternal feeling, sends me to thee.
Thou hold'st the manes of thy son in honour;
Nor wilt permit a bold adventurer
To steal his name and title from the tomb,
And with audacious hand usurp his rights.
Thou wilt proclaim aloud to all the world
That thou dost own him for no son of thine.
Thou wilt not nurse a bastard's alien blood
Upon thy heart, that beats so nobly; never!
Thou wilt — and this the Czar expects from thee —
Give the vile counterfeit the lie, with all
The righteous indignation it deserves.

MARFA. (*who has during the last speech subdued the most violent emotion*)
What do I hear, archbishop? Can it be?
Oh, tell me, by what signs and marks of proof
This bold-faced trickster doth uphold himself
As Ivan's son, whom we bewailed as dead?

IOB. By some faint, shadowy likeness to the Czar,
By documents which chance threw in his way,
And by a precious trinket, which he shows,
He cheats the credulous and wondering mob.

MARFA. What is the trinket? Oh, pray, tell me what?

IOB. A golden cross, gemmed with nine emeralds,
Which Ivan Westislowsky, so he says,
Hung round his neck at the baptismal font.

MARFA. What do you say? He shows this trinket, this? [*With forced composure.*
And how does he allege he came by it?
IOB. A faithful servant and Diak, he says,
Preserved him from the assassins and the flames,
And bore him to Smolenskow privily.
MARFA. But where was he brought up? Where, gives he forth,
Was he concealed and fostered until now?
IOB. In Tschudow's monastery he was reared,
Unknowing who he was; from thence he fled
To Lithuania and Poland, where
He served the Prince of Sendomir, until
An accident revealed his origin.
MARFA. With such a tale as this can he find friends
To peril life and fortune in his cause?
IOB. Oh, madam, false, false-hearted is the Pole,
And enviously he eyes our country's wealth.
He welcomes every pretext that may serve
To light the flames of war within our bounds!
MARFA. And were there credulous spirits, even in Moscow,
Could by this juggle be so lightly stirred?
IOB. Oh, fickle, princess, is the people's heart!
They dote on alteration, and expect
To reap advantage from a change of rulers.
The bold assurance of the falsehood charms;
The marvellous finds favour and belief.
Therefore the Czar is anxious thou shouldst quell
This mad delusion, as thou only canst.
A word from thee annihilates the traitor
That falsely claims the title of thy son.
It joys me thus to see thee moved. I see
The audacious juggle rouses all thy pride,
And with a noble anger paints thy cheek.

MARFA. And where, where, tell me, does he tarry now,
Who dares usurp the title of my son?
IOB. E'en now he's moving on to Tscherinsko;
His camp at Kioff has broke up, 'tis rumoured;
And with a force of mounted Polish troops
And Don Cossacks, he comes to push his claims.
MARFA. Oh, God Almighty, thanks, thanks, thanks, that thou
Hast sent me rescue and revenge at last!
IOB. How, Marfa, how am I to construe this?
MARFA. Oh, heavenly powers, conduct him safely here!
Hover, oh, all ye angels, round his banners!
IOB. Can it be so? The traitor, canst thou trust —
MARFA. He is my son. Yes! by these signs alone
I recognise him. By thy Czar's alarm
I recognise him. Yes! He lives! He comes!
Down, tyrant, from thy throne, and shake with fear!
There still doth live a shoot from Rurik's stem;
The genuine Czar — the rightful heir draws nigh,
He comes to claim a reckoning for his own.
IOB. Dost thou bethink thee what thou say'st? 'Tis madness!
MARFA. At length — at length has dawned the day of vengeance, —
Of restoration. Innocence is dragged
To light by Heaven from the grave's midnight gloom.
The haughty Godunow, my deadly foe,
Must crouch and sue for mercy at my feet;
Oh, now my burning wishes are fulfilled!
IOB. Can hate and rancorous malice blind you so?
MARFA. Can terror blind your monarch so, that he
Should hope deliverance from me — from me —
Whom he hath done immeasurable wrong?
I shall, forsooth, deny the son whom Heaven
Restores me by a miracle from the grave,

And to please him, the butcher of my house,
Who piled upon me woes unspeakable?
Yes, thrust from me the succour God has sent
In the sad evening of my heavy anguish?
No, thou escap'st me not. No, thou shalt hear me,
I have thee fast, I will not let thee free.
Oh, I can ease my bosom's load at last!
At last launch forth against mine enemy
The long-pent anger of my inmost soul!
Who was it, who,
That shut me up within this living tomb,
In all the strength and freshness of my youth,
With all its feelings glowing in my breast?
Who from my bosom rent my darling son,
And chartered ruffian hands to take his life?
Oh, words can never tell what I have suffered,
When, with a yearning that would not be still,
I watched throughout the long, long starry nights,
And noted with my tears the hours elapse!
The day of succour comes, and of revenge;
I see the mighty glorying in his might.

IOB. You think the Czar will dread you — you mistake.

MARFA. He's in my power — one little word from me,
One only, sets the seal upon his fate!
It was for this thy master sent thee here!
The eyes of Russia and of Poland now
Are closely bent upon me. If I own
The Czarowitch as Ivan's son and mine,
Then all will do him homage; his the throne.
If I disown him, then he is undone;
For who will credit that his rightful mother,
A mother wronged, so foully wronged as I,
Could from her heart repulse its darling child,
To league with the despoilers of her house?
I need but speak one word and all the world

Deserts him as a traitor. Is't not so?
This word you wish from me. That mighty service,
Confess, I can perform for Godunow!

IOB. Thou wouldst perform it for thy country, and
Avert the dread calamities of war,
Shouldst thou do homage to the truth. Thyself,
Ay, thou hast ne'er a doubt thy son is dead;
And couldst thou testify against thy conscience?

MARFA. These sixteen years I've mourned his death; but yet
I ne'er have seen his ashes. I believed
His death, there trusting to the general voice
And my sad heart — I now believe he lives,
Trusting the general voice and my strong hope.
'Twere impious, with audacious doubts, to seek
To set a bound to the Almighty's will;
And even were he not my heart's dear son,
Yet should he be the son of my revenge.
In my child's room I take him to my breast,
Whom Heaven has sent me to avenge my wrongs.

IOB. Unhappy one, dost thou defy the strong?
From his far-reaching arm thou art not safe
Even in the convent's distant solitude.

MARFA. Kill me he may, and stifle in the grave,
Or dungeon's gloom, my woman's voice, that it
Shall not reverberate throughout the world.
This he may do; but force me to speak aught
Against my will, that can he not; though backed
By all thy craft — no, he has missed his aim!

IOB. Is this thy final purpose? Ponder well!
Hast thou no gentler message for the Czar?

MARFA. Tell him to hope for heaven, if so he dare,
And for his people's love, if so he can.

IOB. Enough! thou art bent on thy destruction.
Thou lean'st upon a reed, will break beneath thee;
One common ruin will o'erwhelm ye both. [*Exit.*

MARFA. It is my son, I cannot doubt 'tis he.

Even the wild hordes of the uncultured wastes
Take arms upon his side; the haughty Pole,
The Palatine, doth stake his noble daughter
On the pure gold of his most righteous cause,
And I alone reject him — I, his mother?
I, only I, shook not beneath the storm
Of joy that lifts all hearts with dizzying whirl,
And scatters turmoil widely o'er the earth.
He is my son — I must, will trust in him,
And grasp with living confidence the hand
Which Heaven hath sent for my deliverance.
'Tis he, he comes with his embattled hosts,
To set me free, and to avenge my shame!
Hark to his drums, his martial trumpets' clang!
Ye nations come — come from the east and south.
Forth from your steppes, your immemorial woods!
Of every tongue, of every raiment come!
Bridle the steed, the reindeer, and the camel!
Sweep hither, countless as the ocean waves,
And throng around the banners of your king!
Oh, wherefore am I mewed and fettered here,
A prisoned soul with longings infinite!
Thou deathless sun, that circlest earth's huge ball,
Be thou the messenger of my desires!
Thou all-pervading, chainless breeze that sweep'st
With lightning speed to earth's remotest bound,
Oh, bear to him the yearnings of my heart.
My prayers are all I have to give; but these
I pour all glowing from my inmost soul,
And send them up to heaven on wings of flame,
Like armed hosts, I send them forth to hail him.

Scene II.

A height crowned with trees. A wide and smiling landscape occupies the background, which is traversed by a beautiful river, and enlivened by the budding green of spring. At various points the towers of several towns are visible. Drums and martial music without. Enter Odowalsky, *and other officers, and immediately afterward* Demetrius.

Odowalsky. Go, lead the army down by the wood,
Whilst we look round us here upon the height.
[*Exeunt some of the officers.*

Enter Demetrius.

Demetrius. (*starting back*) Ha! what a prospect!
Odowalsky. Sire, thou see'st thy kingdom
Spread out before thee. That is Russian land.
Razin. Why, e'en this pillar here bears Moscow's arms;
Here terminates the empire of the Poles.
Demetrius. Is that the Dnieper, rolls its quiet stream
Along these meadows?
Odowalsky. That, Sire, is the Desna;
See, yonder rise the towers of Tschernizow!
Razin. Yon gleam you see upon the fair horizon
Is from the roofs of Sewerisch Novgorod.
Demetrius. What a rich prospect! What fair meadow lands!
Odowalsky. The spring has decked them with her trim array;
A teeming harvest clothes the fruitful soil.
Demetrius. The view is lost in limitless expanse.
Razin. Yet is this but a small beginning, Sire,

Of Russia's mighty empire. For it spreads
Toward the east to confines unexplored,
And on the north has ne'er a boundary,
Save the productive energy of earth.
Behold, our Czar is quite absorbed in thought.

DEMETRIUS. On these fair meads dwell peace, unbroken peace,
And with war's terrible array I come
To scatter havoc, like a listed foe!

ODOWALSKY. Hereafter 'twill be time to think of that.

DEMETRIUS. Thou feelest as a Pole, I am Moscow's son.
It is the land to which I owe my life;
Forgive me, thou dear soil, land of my home,
Thou sacred boundary-pillar, which I clasp,
Whereon my sire his broad-spread eagle graved,
That I, thy son, with foreign foemen's arms,
Invade the tranquil temple of thy peace.
'Tis to reclaim my heritage I come,
And the proud name that has been stolen from me.
Here the Varegers, my forefathers, ruled,
In lengthened line, for thirty generations;
I am the last of all their lineage, snatched
From murder by God's special providence.

SCENE III.

A Russian village. An open square before a church. The tocsin is heard. GLEB, ILIA, *and* TIMOSKA *rush in, armed with hatchets.*

GLEB. (*entering from a house*) Why are they running?

ILIA. (*entering from another house*) Who has tolled the bell?

TIMOSKA. Neighbours, come forth! Come all, to council come!

[*Enter* OLEG *and* IZOR, *with many other peasants, women and children, who carry bundles.*

GLEB. Whence come ye hither with your wives and children?

IZOR. Fly, fly! The Pole has fallen upon the land
At Maromesk, and slaughters all he finds.

OLEG. Fly into the interior — to strong towns!
We've fired our cottages, there's not a soul
Left in the village, and we're making now
Up country for the army of the Czar.

TIMOSKA. Here comes another troop of fugitives.

[IWANSKA *and* PETRUSCHKA, *with armed peasantry, enter on different sides.*

IWANSKA. Long live the Czar! The mighty prince Dmitri!

GLEB. How! What is this!

ILIA. What do you mean?

TIMOSKA. Who are you?

PETRUSCHKA. Join all who're loyal to our princely line!

TIMOSKA. What means all this? There a whole village flies
Up country to escape the Poles, while you
Make for the very point whence these have fled,
To join the standard of the country's foe!

PETRUSCHKA. What foe? It is no foe that comes; it is
The people's friend, the emperor's rightful heir.

The POSADMIK (the village judge) enters to read a manifesto by Demetrius. Vacillation of the inhabitants of the village between the two parties. The peasant women are the first to be won over to Demetrius, and turn the scale.

Camp of DEMETRIUS. He is worsted in the first action, but the army of the Czar Boris conquers in a manner against its will, and does not follow up its advantages. Demetrius, in despair, is about to destroy himself, and is with difficulty prevented from doing so by Korela and Odowalsky. Overbearing demeanour of the Cossacks even to Demetrius.

Camp of the army of CZAR BORIS. He is absent himself, and this injures his cause, as he is feared but not loved. His army is strong, but not to be relied on. The leaders are not unanimous, and partly incline to the side of Demetrius from a variety of motives. One of their number, Soltikow, declares for him from conviction. His adherence is attended with the most important results; a large portion of the army deserts to Demetrius.

BORIS in Moscow. He still maintains his position as absolute ruler, and has faithful servants around him; but already he is discomposed by evil tidings. He is withheld from joining the army by apprehension of a rebellion in Moscow. He is also ashamed as Czar to enter the field in person against a traitor. Scene between him and the archbishop.

Bad news pours in from all sides, and Boris's danger grows momently more imminent. He hears of the revolt of the peasantry and the provincial towns, — of the inactivity and mutiny of the army, — of the commotions in Moscow, — of the advance of Demetrius. Romanow, whom he has deeply wronged, arrives in Moscow. This gives rise to new apprehensions. Now come the tidings that the Boiars are flying to the camp of Demetrius, and that the whole army has gone over to him.

BORIS and AXINIA. The Czar appears in a touching aspect as father, and in the dialogue with his daughter unfolds his inmost nature.

BORIS has made his way to the throne by crime, but undertaken and fulfilled all the duties of a monarch; to the country he is a valuable prince and a true father of his people. It is only in his personal dealings with individuals that he is cunning, revengeful, and cruel. His spirit as well as his rank elevates him above all that surround him. The long possession of supreme power, the habit of ruling over men, and the despotic form of government, have so nursed his pride that it is impossible for him to outlive his greatness. He sees clearly what awaits him; but still he is Czar, and not degraded, though he resolves to die.

He believes in forewarnings, and in his present mood things appear to him of significance which, on other occasions, he had despised. A particular circumstance, in which he seems to hear the voice of destiny, decides him.

Shortly before his death his nature changes; he grows milder, even toward the messengers of evil, and is ashamed of the bursts of rage with which he had received them before. He permits the worst to be told to him, and even rewards the narrator.

So soon as he learns the misfortune that seals his fate, he leaves the stage without further explanation, with composure and resignation. Shortly afterward he returns in the habit of a monk, and removes his daughter from the sight of his last moments. She is to seek protection from insult in a cloister; his son, Feodor, as a child, will perhaps have less to fear. He takes poison, and enters a retired chamber to die in peace.

General confusion at the tidings of the Czar's death. The Boiars form an imperial council and rule in the Kremlin. Romanow (afterward Czar, and founder of the now ruling house) enters at the head of an armed force, swears, on the bosom of the Czar, an oath of allegiance to his son Feodor, and compels the Boiars to follow his example. Revenge and ambition are far from his soul; he pursues only justice. He loves Axinia without hope, and is, without knowing it, beloved by her in return.

ROMANOW hastens to the army to secure it for the young Czar. Insurrection in Moscow, brought about by the adherents of Demetrius. The people drag the Boiars from their houses, make themselves masters of Feodor and Axinia — put them in prison, and send delegates to Demetrius.

DEMETRIUS in Tula, at the pinnacle of success. The army is his own; the keys of numerous towns are brought to him. Moscow alone appears to offer resistance. He is mild and amiable, testifies a noble emotion at the intelligence of the death of Boris, pardons a detected conspiracy against his life, despises the servile adulations of the Russians, and is for sending them away. The Poles, on the other hand, by whom he is surrounded, are rude and violent, and treat the Russians with contempt. Demetrius longs for a meeting with his mother, and sends a messenger to Marina.

Among the multitude of Russians who throng around Demetrius in Tula appears a man whom he at once recognises; he is greatly delighted to see him. He bids all the rest withdraw, and so soon as he is alone with this man he thanks him, with full heart, as his preserver and benefactor. This person hints that Demetrius is under especial obligations to him, and to a

greater extent than he is himself aware. Demetrius urges him to explain, and the assassin of the genuine Demetrius thereupon discloses the real facts of the case. For this murder he had received no recompense, but on the contrary had nothing but death to anticipate from Boris. Thirsting for revenge, he stumbled upon a boy whose resemblance to the Czar Ivan struck him. This circumstance must be turned to account. He seized the boy, fled with him from Uglitsch, brought him to a monk, whom he succeeded in gaining over for his ends, and delivered to him the trinkets which he had himself taken from the murdered Demetrius. By means of this boy, whom he had never lost sight of, and whose steps he had attended upon all occasions without being observed, he is now revenged. His tool, the false Demetrius, rules over Russia in Boris's room.

During this narration a mighty change comes over Demetrius. His silence is awful. In the moment of the highest rage and despair, the assassin drives him to the extreme of endurance, when with a defying and insolent air he demands his reward. Demetrius strikes him to the earth.

Soliloquy of Demetrius. Internal conflict; but the feeling of the necessity for maintaining his position as Czar is triumphant.

The delegates from Moscow arrive, and submit themselves to Demetrius. They are received gloomily, and with a menacing demeanour. Among them is the Patriarch. Demetrius deposes him from his dignity, and soon afterward sentences to death a Russian of rank, who had questioned the authenticity of his birth.

MARFA and OLGA await Demetrius under a magnificent tent. Marfa speaks of the approaching interview with more doubt and fear than hope, and trembles as the moment draws near which should assure her highest happiness. Olga speaks to her, herself without faith. During the long journey they have both had time to recall the whole circumstances; the first exultation had given place to reflection. The gloomy silence and the repulsive glances of the guards who surround the tent serve still further to augment their despondency.

The trumpets sound. Marfa is irresolute whether she shall advance to meet Demetrius. Now he stands before her alone. The little that was left of hope in her heart altogether vanishes on seeing him. An unknown something steps between them — nature does not speak — they are separated for ever. The first impulse is an endeavour to approach; Marfa is the first to make a movement to recede. Demetrius observes it, and remains for a moment paralysed. Significant silence.

DEMETRIUS. Does thy heart say nothing? Dost thou not recognise thy blood in me?

MARFA is silent.

DEMETRIUS. The voice of nature is holy and free; I will neither constrain nor belie it. Had thy heart spoken at the first glance then had mine answered it; thou shouldst have found a pious, loving son in me. The claim of duty would have concurred with inclination and heartfelt affection. But if thou dost not feel as a mother for me, then, think as a princess, command thyself as a queen! Fate unexpectedly gave me to thee as a son; accept me as a gift of Heaven. Though even I were not thy son, which I now appear to be, still I rob thy son of nothing. I stripped it from thy foe. Thee and thy blood have I avenged; I have de-

livered thee from the grave in which thou wert entombed alive, and led thee back into the royal seat. That thy destiny is linked with mine thou knowest. With me thou standest, and with me must fall. All the people's eyes are upon us. I hate deception, and what I do not feel I may not show; but I do really feel a reverence for thee, and this feeling, which bends my knee before thee, comes from my heart.

[*Dumb show of* MARFA, *to indicate her internal emotion.*

DEMETRIUS. Make thy resolve! Let that which nature will not prompt be the free act of thy will! I ask no hypocrisy — no falsehood, from thee; I ask genuine feelings. Do not seem to be my mother, but be so. Throw the past from thee — grasp the present with thy whole heart! If I am not thy son yet I am the Czar — I have power and success upon my side. He who lies in his grave is dust; he has no heart to love thee, no eye to smile upon thee. Turn to the living. [MARFA *bursts into tears.*

DEMETRIUS. Oh, these golden drops are welcome to me. Let them flow! Show thyself thus to the people!

[*At a signal from* DEMETRIUS *the tent is thrown open, and the assembled Russians become spectators of this scene.*

Entrance of Demetrius into Moscow. Great splendour, but of a military kind. Poles and Cossacks compose the procession. Gloom and terror mingle with the demonstrations of joy. Distrust and misfortune surround the whole.

ROMANOW, who came to the army too late, has returned to Moscow to protect Feodor and Axinia. It is all in vain; he is himself thrown into prison. Axinia flies to Marfa, and at her feet implores protection against the Poles. Here Demetrius sees her, and

a violent and irresistible passion is kindled in his breast. Axinia detests him.

DEMETRIUS as Czar. A fearful element sustains him, but he does not control it: he is urged on by the force of strange passions. His inward consciousness betokens a general distrust; he has no friend on whom he can rely. Poles and Cossacks, by their insolent licentiousness, injure him in the popular opinion. Even that which is creditable to him — his popular manners, simplicity, and contempt of stiff ceremonial, occasions dissatisfaction. Occasionally he offends, through inadvertency, the usages of the country. He persecutes the monks because he suffered severely under them. Moreover, he is not exempt from despotic caprices in the moments of offended pride. Odowalsky knows how to make himself at all times indispensable to him, removes the Russians to a distance, and maintains his overruling influence.

DEMETRIUS meditates inconstancy to Marina. He confers upon the point with the Archbishop Iob, who, in order to get rid of the Poles, falls in with his desire, and puts before him an exalted picture of the imperial power.

MARINA appears with a vast retinue in Moscow. Meeting with Demetrius. Hollow and cold meeting on both sides; she, however, wears her disguise with greater skill. She urges an immediate marriage. Preparations are made for a magnificent festival.

By the orders of Marina a cup of poison is brought to Axinia. Death is welcome to her; she was afraid of being forced to the altar with the Czar.

Violent grief of Demetrius. With a broken heart he goes to the betrothal with Marina.

After the marriage Marina discloses to him that she does not consider him to be the true Demetrius, and never did. She then coldly leaves him in a state of extreme anguish and dismay.

Meanwhile SCHINSKOI, one of the former generals of the Czar BORIS, avails himself of the growing discontent of the people, and becomes the head of a conspiracy against Demetrius.

ROMANOW, in prison, is comforted by a supernatural apparition. Axinia's spirit stands before him, opens to him a prospect of happier times in store, and enjoins him calmly to allow destiny to ripen, and not to stain himself with blood. ROMANOW receives a hint that he may himself be called to the throne. Soon afterward he is solicited to take part in the conspiracy, but declines.

SOLTIKOW reproaches himself bitterly for having betrayed his country to Demetrius. But he will not be a second time a traitor, and adheres, from principle and against his feelings, to the party which he has once adopted. As the misfortune has happened, he seeks at least to alleviate it, and to enfeeble the power of the Poles. He pays for this effort with his life; but he accepts death as a merited punishment, and confesses this when dying to Demetrius himself.

CASIMIR, a brother of LODOISKA, a young Polish lady, who has been secretly and hopelessly attached to Demetrius, in the house of the Waywode of Sendomir, has, at his sister's request, accompanied Demetrius in the campaign, and in every encounter defended him bravely. In the moment of danger, when all the other

retainers of Demetrius think only of their personal safety, Casimir alone remains faithful to him, and sacrifices life in his defence.

The conspiracy breaks out. Demetrius is with Marfa when the leading conspirators force their way into the room. The dignity and courage of Demetrius have a momentary effect upon the rebels. He nearly succeeds in disarming them by a promise to place the Poles at their disposal. But at this point SCHINSKOI rushes in with an infuriated band. An explicit declaration is demanded from the ex-empress; she is required to swear, upon the cross, that Demetrius is her son. To testify against her conscience in a manner so solemn is impossible. She turns from Demetrius in silence, and is about to withdraw. "Is she silent?" exclaims the tumultuous throng. "Does she disown him?" "Then, traitor, die!" and Demetrius falls, pierced by their swords, at Marfa's feet.

THE END.

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